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A

PARAPHRASE

UPON THE

FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

OF THE

First Epiſtle to the CORINTHIANS;

WITH

Critical NOTES and OBSERVATIONS, and a PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION.

A

COMMENTARY, with CRITICAL REMARKS, upon the Sixth, Seventh, and Part of the Eighth Chapters of the *ROMANS*.

To which is added,

A SERMON on *ECCLESIASTES* IX. 10.

Compoſed by the AUTHOR the Day preceding his Death.

By JOHN ALEXANDER.

Καλὸν ἐστι μαθοντα τὰ δικαιωματα τȣ Θȣ ἐν τȣτοις περιπατειν ---- Ὁ γαρ ταυτα ποιων ἐν τῃ Βασιλεια τȣ Θȣ δοξασθησεται· ὁ δὲ ἑκαστα ἐκλεγομενος μετα των ἐργων αὐτȣ συναπολειται. Δια τȣτο ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ, δια τȣτο ἀνταποδοσις.

Ep. Barnabæ.

Cæterum quis tam ſtultus aut brutus eſt, ut audeat repugnare hominem a Deo, ut primum potuiſſe fingi, ita poſſe denuo reformari? nihil eſſe poſt obitum, et ante ortum nihil fuiſſe: ſicut de nihilo naſci licuit, ita de nihilo licere reperari.

MINUCIUS FELIX.

LONDON:

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M.DCC.LXVI.

A

PARAPHRASE

ON THE

FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

OF THE

First Epistle to the CORINTHIANS;

WITH

Critical Notes and OBSERVATIONS, and

a PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION.

A

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following ſheets are exactly printed from the Author's manuſcript, which he compleated with his own hand, and the impreſſion had nearly received the finiſhing ſtroke, when it pleaſed Divine Providence to call him hence.

Mr. Alexander *, *beſides many other uſeful and pleaſing talents which he poſſeſſed, was remarked by all who knew him for clearneſs of perception and ſolidity of judgment. In aid of theſe, he enjoyed the ſingular advantage of being for ſome years a ſtudent under that very judicious divine, and able critick in the Sacred Writings, the late Reverend Dr.* Benſon; *who honoured him with a diſtinguiſhed place in his friendſhip, and often expreſſed the higheſt ſatisfaction in the great endowments and equal improvements of his pupil.---He was, indeed, no leſs an object of admiration to his acquaintance for the intenſeneſs of his application, than for the native ſtrength of his mind: by the united force of which, he made thoſe advances in knowledge and literature, which are very rarely attained by perſons at his age* †.

* Mr. Alexander was the ſon of the Rev. Mr. John Alexander, a diſſenting miniſter, who formerly kept an academy at Stratford upon Avon; a perſon of the firſt note in his time for oriental learning.

† He had not compleated his thirtieth year. He went to bed on Saturday, December 28, 1765, between eleven and twelve, in perfect health; and at ſix the next morning, when he was called to go to Longdon, a ſmall village about twelve miles from Birmingham, where he had officiated for ſome time, was found a cold and breathleſs corpſe.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The ſtudy of religion and the Scriptures, as it was the buſineſs of his profeſſion, was alſo his favourite employment.

The Work, now offered to the publick, was the reſult of his deliberate examination into thoſe parts of Sacred Writ which it is deſigned to elucidate; and, it cannot be doubted, was drawn up with the beſt intention of promoting the knowledge of Sacred Truth. How far any particular ſentiments, which the Author has advanced, are ſupported by thoſe Scriptures which he has interpreted in favour of them, the Reader will determine for himſelf. But whatever may be thought of our Author's Opinions, his Performance will, it is apprehended, be deemed not unworthy the attention of the judicious enquirer into revelation.

To thoſe, who had no other proof of his abilities, it will afford ſome idea of the loſs the world has ſuſtained by his early removal, which they who had the happineſs of an intimacy with him deeply deplore.

The Sermon, which is annexed, was the laſt the Author ever compoſed, and was finiſhed but the evening before his death, with an intention of being delivered the day following. A circumſtance, which, it is preſumed, may give additional force to the many weighty and affecting admonitions with which the diſcourſe abounds.

It is principally with this view his friends have choſen to make it publick; and, as the ſubject bears ſome analogy to that of the preceding work, it is hoped it may be conſidered as no improper ſupplement to it.

PRE-

PREFACE.

THE multitude of comments upon Scripture, together with the variety of different and even contrary opinions which are ſupported by it, have given occaſion to think that books which are the foundation of ſo much diſpute and perplexity, muſt have been penned in a very obſcure and ambiguous manner. That there are many real difficulties in Scripture ariſing from the nature of language in general, of the particular languages in which it is written, ſome inaccuracies of the writers, together with their neglect of ſtrict logical method, can hardly be called in queſtion by any reaſonable perſon. But perhaps the ſource of that ſignal contradiction and confuſion, which is to be found among the interpreters of theſe writings, muſt be ſought for from other cauſes than the books themſelves. And probably moſt of thoſe errours into which men have run concerning the ſenſe of Scripture may be reſolved into one or other of theſe three things: 1. a falſe philoſophy which obtained in the church very ſoon after theſe books came to be read and ſtudied; 2. a vain curioſity of prying into the ſecrets of divine government, and being wiſe above meaſure, or, in other words, expecting more diſcoveries from revelation concerning the nature of God and his providence, the nature of man, and the particular plan of divine conduct toward him, than was in reaſon to be expected, or than was neceſſary to make us wiſe unto ſalvation; 3. the cuſtom which has ever prevailed of building doctrines upon detached paſſages and incidental expreſſions of Scripture, with a total inattention to the point in view, and often in direct contradiction to it. I mention only theſe three: for I would not inſiſt upon ſome meaner cauſes which ſometimes operated to this end; ſuch as the pride, avarice, ambition of particular men or bodies of men; who could never have done much miſchief this way, if ſome one or other of the above-mentioned prejudices had not been favourable to their deſigns. I do not chuſe to dwell upon each of theſe conſiderations diſtinctly; becauſe for the moſt part they have coincided to lead men out of the way, and help

forward the grand deceit. While the Scriptures were chiefly read in publick, and were not ſpread into a large number of hands, and before they had been made the ſubject of many homilies and treatiſes, it can never be imagined that all thoſe doctrines and articles of faith, which were afterward built upon them, could have entered the heads of the generality of honeſt ſimple people, who heard them read once a week in their aſſemblies. But as ſoon as theſe books came to be enquired after greedily, and copies of them found a place in the ſtudies of ſpeculative men, juſt freſh from the ſchools of Greece and Egypt, they examined them no doubt with a cloſer attention; much too cloſe perhaps it may be thought by ſome, upon conſidering the uſe which was made of them. It was ſoon found that they treated of matters the moſt intereſting to mankind, and contained a much more ſublime and elevated Theology than Pythagoras or Plato had ever taught, and ſupported too by an authority to which theſe great maſters never pretended. They were eaſily caught by this favourite handle. They thought that they had diſcovered an ineſtimable treaſure—not indeed ſuch a treaſure as theſe books really contain, of every thing neceſſary for the direction and comfort of human life; but ſomething vaſtly inferior to this, though unhappily more prized by ſpeculative minds —I mean a ſolution of the moſt difficult problems in Philoſophy and Theology. They dreamed of nothing leſs, than a ſyſtem of univerſal knowledge. They ſtudied theſe books as a ſcheme of Science, not of Religion. Their thirſt for the former would not give them leave to conſider coolly, what might juſtly be expected from the latter; or whether it were an object deſerving the divine interpoſition, to conduct the ſpeculations of men in a number of points much more curious than intereſting.

The great Teacher of Chriſtianity, whoſe buſineſs it was as the Prophet and High-Prieſt of our Profeſſion, to teach us knowledge, and initiate his followers into all the myſteries of his religion, ſtudiouſly repreſſed that idle curioſity of prying into every ſecret of divine providence, and refuſed diſcuſſing thoſe queſtions which did not tend directly to the improvement of life and manners. The myſteries of his kingdom, which he ſometimes delivered in parabolic repreſentations, and explained more particularly to his diſciples, were nothing but moral ſentiments and reflections, calculated for general uſe, and dreſt up in an entertaining manner, though more covered and indirect than was his frequent practice of teaching, for the ſake of making deeper impreſſion on the minds of men, or conveying reproof to the wicked with leſs aſperity and offence. But theſe things would never ſatisfy the inquiſitive genius of men, long uſed to range the whole circuit

circuit of metaphyſics; to contemplate not only the viſible, but intellectual univerſe; to trace the generation of gods and demons; and to explore thoſe ſubtle eſſences, which by being unfortunately linked to matter are dragged down below the moon, but when they eſcape from their terreſtrial priſon fly away to the regions of light, and become once more pure and heavenly intelligences. They were much more curious to find out the origin of evil, than the means by which it may be removed; and to know how men came to be Sinners, than by what methods they may be reformed and amended.

It is not difficult to ſee how men muſt have proceeded in order to obtain ſatisfaction from Scripture upon the above-mentioned points. Nothing can be plainer than that the ſacred books do not contain a regular ſyſtem of Theological or Metaphyſical Truths. If they contain ſuch a ſyſtem at all, it muſt be in detached hints, occaſional reflections, or particular parts of the Hiſtory or Prophecy. The writers or ſpeakers in theſe books do not treat of ſuch ſubjects profeſſedly, or in the manner of lecture, but as I may ſay by the by, and according to the particular views which they had before them. The being and perfections of God, his natural and moral attributes, his wiſdom, power, righteouſneſs and goodneſs are conſidered as already known, or at leaſt ſufficiently diſcoverable to every thinking mind. To theſe they conſtantly appeal, ground all their reaſonings upon them, and by theſe confirm the faith of men in thoſe particular doctrines which are derived from pure revelation. They do not introduce any obſervations concerning the divine nature with "Behold I ſhew you a myſtery", but every thing is taught as clear and knowable. Theſe points therefore being neither urged as myſterious nor new to man, it is evident that the writers muſt either refer to ſome other treatiſes and diſcourſes which they have left upon the ſubject and in which theſe matters were more fully diſcuſſed and explained, or elſe to the common ſentiment of mankind, that is, to the univerſal revelation which God has made of himſelf in the works of creation and providence. The ſeveral branches of duty alſo, which we owe to God or to each other, are by no means treated as novel or arbitrary inſtitutions, but as taught by laws written upon the human heart, and approving their obligation to the conſciences of every reaſonable being. The facts or doctrines which were ſpecially taught by Jeſus, or afterward by his apoſtles as preachers of Chriſt and heralds of the kingdom of God, namely the divine miſſion of Jeſus; his character as the Meſſiah; his death, reſurrection and aſcenſion; that repentance and remiſſion of ſins was to be preached in his name; that he is appointed of God to judge the whole world; and that he will appear again to raiſe the dead, to

execute judgment upon the wicked, and to confer life and immortality upon the righteous; are ſo fully, ſo frequently and ſo profeſſedly inſiſted upon throughout the New Teſtament, that none but the moſt whimſical or extravagant minds can be capable of doubting whether they are the doctrines of the goſpel. If men could have been ſatisfied with the belief of theſe few plain and important points, joining to them thoſe ſentiments of God and our duty which are ſo agreeable both to nature and revelation, could it ever have been pretended that the Scriptures were obſcure? at leaſt could it have been ſaid that it was ſuch a difficult matter for men to know what was THE GOSPEL, or what doctrines Chriſt and his apoſtles taught mankind? Certainly it is not in order to make out and explain theſe doctrines that we have recourſe to critics and commentators, muſter up various readings, and torture words and phraſes all manner of ways. And if theſe and nothing elſe ſhould be THE GOSPEL—which all allow to be important parts of it, and which alone, as far as we know of, were inſiſted upon in the apoſtles ſermons—the labour of criticks is not near ſo neceſſary as has been imagined, and a number of controverſies might be dropt altogether without the leaſt detriment to the Chriſtian church.

What ſhall we ſay then to thoſe numerous appendages to the goſpel, which ſo many conſider as eſſential parts of it, and without which —ſuch is the zeal of the Chriſtian world—the remainder in their opinion would not be worth believing? This we may ſay, without giving offence to any. They are either plainly declared neceſſary to be believed in the Scriptures, or they are not. Alſo, they are either ſo clearly revealed, that no reaſonable perſon can doubt the ſenſe of the propoſitions which contain them; or they are ſo ambiguouſly expreſſed, that the words in which they occur are capable of two or more explanations. Further, they are either ſo obvious to human reaſon, that ſome men might have diſcovered them without a revelation, or have demonſtrated their truth after being revealed; or elſe, they are ſo much above reaſon, that neither the points themſelves, nor the ſteps upon which their truth depends, could ever have been known without ſome ſuperiour aſſiſtance. Now if the belief of each and all of them together be not plainly declared neceſſary to ſalvation, how ſhould it be known that they are ſo? If they have been ſo clearly revealed, that no reaſonable perſon can doubt the ſenſe of the propoſitions which contain them, whence came all the diſputes about the ſignification of theſe very paſſages? If they are no where declared neceſſary to be believed in order to ſalvation; and are beſides ſo ambiguouſly expreſſed that they are always capable of being underſtood in two ſenſes; and at the ſame time ſo much above reaſon, that we can neither

neither find them out of ourſelves, nor prove them true when diſcovered to us by another—what courſe have we to take? May we not juſtly affirm, that the belief of no doctrine can be neceſſary to ſalvation, which is not plainly declared ſo, and at the ſame time ſo fully defined and explained, that every one who reads may underſtand? If the words of Scripture ſhould ever be capable of two ſenſes, one agreeable to reaſon, and the other inconſiſtent with or above it, ought we not in conſcience, and in juſtice to the writers, to prefer that which is moſt agreeable to reaſon? And is it not a ſufficient prejudice againſt any rules of interpretation, that they lead us aſtray from common ſenſe, and put us upon hunting for myſtery?

If the Scriptures be generally unintelligible, men ſeem to have made them ſo by adopting vitious rules of interpretation. No book ſhould be reckoned obſcure, when the words in it are capable of an eaſy and rational expoſition. And this expoſition ought always to paſs for the true one: even though it be poſſible by ſelecting particular paſſages, and introducing them in another view than the writer intended, to make him the patron of the moſt abſurd and contradictory ſentiments. By this very method how many opinions, the offspring of ignorance and preſumption, have been fathered upon Divine Wiſdom?

Further, as the enquiry is concerning the ſenſe of Scripture, in what manner this muſt be inveſtigated, we may naturally be led to aſk previous to the ſtudy of it, Whether it be probable that the Father of light, and benevolent Parent of men, ſhould reveal doctrines, the belief of which is ſuppoſed neceſſary to ſalvation, ſo ambiguouſly that it might ſtill be matter of doubt with many honeſt minds, not only in what ſenſe they muſt be taken, but whether they have been revealed at all? And if it be not probable, then this is a ſtrong reaſon a priori againſt that method of interpretation, which muſt neceſſarily take this point for granted. And that argument which has been ſo often urged to frighten men into certain opinions, may juſtly be turned againſt the perſons who employ it; ſo that by pretending to too much on their own ſide, they run the riſk of being more conſpicuouſly defeated. Further, theſe doctrines are univerſally allowed to be ſo much above our reaſon, and therefore men would be ſo likely to miſtake, either in rejecting them entirely or underſtanding them in a wrong ſenſe, that this could not but have been a motive with a merciful Deity, who knows the imperfection of our whole frame, for explaining and defining them ſo fully that men might not impoſe upon themſelves nor be deceived by others in ſuch momentous concerns. Has this been the caſe? If it has not, may we not juſtly preſume that no ſuch doctrines have been revealed; but that they

are the inferences of weak fallible men, who have turned the Scriptures to their own purpoſes, and made them ſpeak a language which was never intended?

But ſtill will it not follow, may ſome one ſay, that the Scriptures are obſcure, when men could miſtake them in this manner? And either way muſt it not be credible, that they are a very unſafe and fallacious guide—whether they contain theſe doctrines which ſome deny, or the very contrary, which are denied by others? No. For if, as we have endeavoured to ſhew, there was ſufficient light for men to follow in the interpretation of the Scriptures, the reaſon and common ſenſe of mankind, and they have generally deſerted this, and choſen other guides, their prejudices and paſſions, in the room of reaſon, ought this to be charged to the account of Scripture? If it ſhould be aſked, however, whether it was not expedient that mankind ſhould have had ſome ſpecial directions for interpreting the Scriptures according to the rules of common ſenſe, and which might have guarded them againſt thoſe forced and myſtical expoſitions which they have ſo often adopted? To this I anſwer, If the Bible had indeed been written in that obſcure and enigmatical manner, which many have ſuppoſed out of their own heads or upon the authority of other miſtaken viſionaries; ſo as to be little more than a word to the wiſe, and frequently expreſs the force of a whole treatiſe in a ſingle ſentence; and this too upon ſubjects the moſt abſtruſe, and in their nature incomprehenſible—it was not only expedient but highly neceſſary to inform the world very particularly of the nature and value of the treaſure put into their hands; that they might neither paſs it by altogether unnoticed, nor deſpiſe it when found out. But on the other hand, if the writers and ſpeakers in the ſacred volume only expreſſed themſelves as other men uſed to do, ſometimes figuratively and ſometimes literally upon the ſame ſubjects, as it beſt ſuited their purpoſe, and which is generally diſcoverable to a careful reader, what occaſion could there be to advertiſe men of a circumſtance which they would naturally ſuppoſe, and which they ought in all reaſon to have taken for granted, without expreſs warning to the contrary?

Can it be accounted for by any one who believes the wiſdom and goodneſs of God that theſe neceſſary doctrines ſhould be ſo much more clearly revealed in Creeds and Articles of Faith, drawn up by Councils many ages after, than they are in the Sacred Writings? Will it be pretended that theſe men were left with authority to ſupply the defects of revelation, and explain that which was ſaid obſcurely or ambiguouſly by Chriſt and his apoſtles. If not, what reaſon is there for paying ſo much regard to their deciſions? Can it be proved that their

confeſſions

confeſſions are drawn up in ſuch perfect harmony with the Scriptures, that they neither confine nor enlarge the ſenſe of the text? Then there is little occaſion for them, and we can ſatisfy ourſelves with the Scriptures alone. Or, Are they neceſſary additions in order to fix the ſenſe of Scripture, and guard againſt the abuſes of Hereticks? Then it is confeſſed that the Scriptures are ambiguous, and that a man without ſuch helps might as well have taken them in an Heterodox as an Orthodox ſenſe. And were the compilers of the ſeveral creeds and confeſſions ſo much wiſer than Chriſt and his apoſtles, that they knew how to expreſs *their* ſenſe in better language, and ſuch as no evil-minded men could hereafter abuſe?

It cannot have eſcaped the notice of ſuch as are the leaſt acquainted with Scripture or Antiquity, that the doctrines of which we are ſpeaking have not been ſo clearly defined in the New Teſtament as to exclude all doubt that this one ſenſe given by councils and no other is the ſenſe of Scripture. Further, thoſe divines, who lived neareſt the times in which theſe books were written, appear by their ſilence to have been but little acquainted with ſuch doctrines, and do not enlarge upon or refer to them, as we might have expected from their ſuppoſed importance. Nay, if any books ſhould be produced, ſtuffed with theſe doctrines, and pretending to be wrote in thoſe early ages, it would be thought a ſufficient demonſtration of their being groſsly interpolated or altogether forged, that they contained a ſentiment and language unknown to thoſe primitive times. Deſcending a little lower in the order of time, we find more and more ſimilitude to the language of our preſent creeds, according as the doctrines happened to have been licked into form, and to have received more accurate touches from their projectors: till at the end of four, five, ſeven or ten centuries, they were quite complete, and fit to appear in any creed or ſyſtem it ſhould pleaſe that age to turn out. Is not this a very ſtrong preſumption, that they were the invention of later ages, who turned and twiſted the Scriptures to their own purpoſes; and, aided by ſchool jargon and metaphyſical diſtinctions, began to ſpy out meanings, which none but themſelves would ever have thought of looking for?

Let us conſider then of what kind are the paſſages of Scripture, in which the doctrines are ſuppoſed to be contained. I affirm then, that, allowing the moſt that can be ſaid for them as proofs, they are equivocal, and have gained an importance in the controverſy by having been often quoted, and being thus an appeal to the prejudices of mankind. I ſay that they are at moſt equivocal, becauſe, ſuppoſing that the Creeds and Syſtems which explain them had been written

before the Scriptures, or both by the ſame hands, it would then be juſt probable that the writers of the Scripture had now and then ſome ſlight alluſion to theſe doctrines, in the paſſages which are quoted as proofs of them. But it muſt always be incredible that doctrines ſo neceſſary to men, and at the ſame time ſo exceeding difficult and myſterious that they might eaſily be miſtaken, ſhould be ſo looſely revealed, that men could not till after ſeveral centuries, and a long train of ſyllogiſm and inference, diſcover and ſettle their meaning. This tends to ſhew, that if they are not clearly revealed, they are not revealed at all. For is it not abſurd to pin down the ſenſe of Scripture by a number of creeds and confeſſions firſt of all, and then urge that theſe confeſſions contain nothing but what may be fully made out from Scripture? Is it not palpably arguing in a circle, to prove the ſenſe of Scripture from the creeds, and the orthodoxy of the creeds from their agreement with Scripture?

I have ſaid before, that if any writing be capable both of a rational and irrational ſenſe (which I believe moſt are that deal at all in figure, and do not always obſerve the ſimpleſt forms of conſtruction) there is no reaſon for calling it obſcure, or ballancing a moment between the two ſenſes. It is not for a Critick to ſay in that caſe, as he does ſometimes, "I *chuſe* to underſtand my author this way," and "the words will bear ſuch a ſenſe." If he *will* make an author talk nonſenſe, he ought in common juſtice to prove, that his words cannot without great force and ſtraining be capable of another meaning. But has this rule been ſtrictly obſerved in the interpretation of Scripture? Has it ſo generally recommended the ſenſe of any phraſe to Criticks, that it helps to ſet a paſſage of ſacred writ in a clear and rational light, which every man of common ſenſe muſt approve? Have not they for the moſt part laboured to confirm, by a parade of learning and uncouth jargon, thoſe ſignifications of particular paſſages, which, when eſtabliſhed, no man in the world can underſtand, or diſcern what good uſe is to be made of them? Further, I ſpeak it with grief, has it ever happened that the grammatical order of the words, by taking literal paſſages figuratively or the contrary, would be as an abſurd, ridiculous or even blaſphemous meaning, without being given by ſome commentators, eſpouſed by ſome ſect?——And we may be thankful that the men who call it in queſtion have not been anathematized by ſome council, or, what is infinitely more dreadful, delivered over to the hangman by the ſtate. Is it to be wondered at that men ſhould miſtake the ſenſe of a book, which they have always ſtudied without principles, and by the authority of which they were more bent to ſupport any idle and unintelligible propoſitions, than the moſt rational and excellent?

The

The general manner of proving doctrines from Scripture is very remarkable. I have obſerved that one ſhould have expected to have found them contained as fully and preciſely in the books of the Old or New Teſtament, as in any ſyſtems of ſchool-divinity: becauſe they are ſuppoſed ſo neceſſary to our happineſs; and being ſo much above the human ken, it was eaſy for the honeſteſt and acuteſt mind to have miſtaken them, without being thus accurately defined. This however is not pretended. When you call upon them for their authorities, one paſſage, which proves nothing, is quoted from an Epiſtle perhaps; this is explained and confirmed by another as little to the purpoſe out of the Pſalms; and this again by a citation from ſome one of the Prophets; and ſo on, backwards and forwards, from one end of the Bible to another. If this had been done to ſhew the ſenſe of a diſputed phraſe, or aſcertain an antient cuſtom, it was very commendable, and the only way perhaps there was for doing it. But when I am told that it is to make out a very myſterious doctrine, the belief of which is abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation, and which could not have been known without a careful examination of theſe diſtant and unconnected paſſages, and comparing them together over and over again, I do not know which is the moſt aſtoniſhing, the folly or preſumption of the men I have to do with.

A critick ſhould be very careful in extracting out of the works of any maſter propoſitions which are not contained there in ſo many words. For if he ſhould allow himſelf to ſyllogize at random, and charge his inferences from a number of independent paſſages, where the ſubjects are not treated of profeſſedly, as the genuine ſentiments of the writer, or take words and phraſes in their moſt rigid ſignification, where, from the very nature of the compoſition, he has no right to expect the preciſion of an artiſt, he might perhaps blunder twenty times for once he ſhould happen to be right. This is true of every book, and not more ſo perhaps of the Bible, than of any other book of ſuch various argument, which, had it been ſo much ſweated and tortured by every different party of Chriſtians, would probably have been full as confuſed and uncertain. Thus nothing in general has been eaſier with Divines, than to find out a proof from Scripture of any point whatſoever which they choſe to have believed; of Purgatory, for inſtance. For they had nothing to do but to rummage into all the paſſages of the Bible, where mention was made of fire and flame, and it was fifty to one but they found ſomewhat ſaid, in ſome connection or another, that they could accommodate to their purpoſe. But does any man in his ſenſes think the Scriptures obſcure, becauſe they do not decide this point more fully? or ambiguous, becauſe a ſingle expreſſion

in it is capable of conveying the ſpeculations of ſome late divines upon that head? And will it not always be more probable, that ſomething elſe was meant in that one paſſage, than that a doctrine of the Scripture, which could be known no other way than from revelation, ſhould be taught ſo confuſedly as never to be underſtood, till ſome ingenious divine ſtarted up and let us into the ſecret? I do not deny but there are many paſſages of Scripture, the preciſe ſenſe of which is unknown to this day, and may remain ſo as long as the world laſts. But I can never be perſuaded that they contain peculiar doctrines of the goſpel, which are of importance to be known and received, or without which a man muſt everlaſtingly periſh.

Further, if nonſenſe can ever be true and of divine authority, it cannot be denied but that tranſubſtantiation may be a doctrine of the New Teſtament; if it be not more proper to ſay in that caſe, that it is not inconſiſtent with it, or that it may have been very looſely and imperfectly hinted in thoſe words of our Saviour, *This is my Body*. And it is poſſible to bring men to think the Scriptures very ambiguous upon this point, while they believe it a matter of abſolute indifference whether they underſtand the words of a divine Teacher in the moſt reaſonable or the moſt unreaſonable ſenſe. But can it ever be credible to ſober, thinking perſons, that a myſtery, ſufficient to aſtoniſh and confound the higheſt order of Angels or Archangels, ſhould never be explicitly taught poor blundering mortals? that it ſhould be only inſinuated, and this in ſuch a ſlight, negligent, *hocus-pocus* way, as the aſſertion of a man at ſupper, holding a piece of bread in his own hand, muſt appear, on the leaſt conſideration, to ſuch as will ſuppoſe him teaching one of the moſt abſtruſe and incomprehenſible doctrines that can be imagined? Was it not fit that there ſhould have been ſome little preparation to reconcile the world to this aſtoniſhing miracle, and bring them hereafter to adore and wonder? And, on the other hand, provided there was no ſuch myſtery intended, could the moſt cautious and ſuſpecting perſon have ſuggeſted *a priori* the fear of any miſtake which might ariſe hereafter, as a reaſon for rejecting figure in this caſe, and expreſſing the matter more plainly? The thing ſpeaks for itſelf. It was not poſſible to palm ſuch an extravagance upon mankind, till after the ſubject had been ſet off with all the arts of rhetorick and deſcription, exaggerated by an infinitude of declamations, puzzled at length with ſcholaſtic diſtinctions, and the minds of people prepared by a long courſe of bowing and cringing to believe any thing concerning a ſubſtance which they were accuſtomed to adore. Ten or eleven centuries were hardly ſufficient to pave the way, and gain it a peaceable admiſſion into the minds of men. Yet a parcel

of illiterate fiſhermen are ſuppoſed to take the hint at once, to be ſo much more acute upon this occaſion than they ever were upon any other, and to underſtand, as it were by inſpiration, that they were ſwallowing down their maſter, all alive, while to all human appearance they were only devouring a piece of broken bread. Surely it is not enough to be ſaid in ſuch a caſe, whether by the friends or enemies of revelation, that the words have been thus interpreted, or may be taken in ſuch a ſenſe. It muſt then be incumbent upon thoſe who charge the Scripture with ſuch doctrines, to prove one of theſe three things, either, firſt, that the doctrine is as natural and agreeable to human reaſon as this is evidently repugnant to it; or, ſecondly, that the teacher or writer was a madman; or elſe, laſtly, that the words cannot fairly be underſtood in a different ſignification.

The humour of former days ſeems to have been much of the kind which I am now going to mention. If any debate happened to ariſe between two or three divines in a province, it might be concerning the moſt proper ſeaſon for paring their nails, or whether Adam was created on Monday or Friday, a ſynod was preſently called to determine theſe points of doctrine or diſcipline. After a long hearing, *pro* and *con*, the matter was at length put to the vote; and having collected the ſenſe of the majority, they proceeded to draw up an inſtrument to bind the men of that age and their poſterity, under pain of everlaſting damnation, to maintain the truth of their determinations to the end of the world.

If ſuch a ſynod of reverend and grave divines ſhould preſs me with the authority of their deciſions upon any point of controverſy, I ſhould be inclined to reply to them in this manner: "Holy Fathers, I ſincerely believe in God and in his Meſſiah. Why ſhould not this "be ſufficient, without believing alſo in you? Shew me any paſſages "of Scripture, where theſe doctrines are as clearly revealed and explained as they have been by you, and have been declared neceſſary "to my ſalvation to believe, and I ſubmit at once. But do not expect me to pay the ſame regard to your interpretations and comments, your inferences and ſyllogiſms, as to the word of God. "You tell me that God has no mercy for hereticks, and that I muſt "periſh everlaſtingly, unleſs I yield my hearty aſſent to your capacious creeds. I am ſorry, moſt reverend Fathers, to fall under "your curſes for viewing ſuch ſubjects in a different light. But, as "I ſee no way of coming to an agreement upon the point, I think "it much ſafer, notwithſtanding all that you have ſaid of God's judgments againſt hereticks, to truſt him with my ſoul, than you with "my ſenſes."

A miſtake

A miſtake once made, in this method of deciding controverſies, is tranſmitted to diſtant generations, becauſe men are too apt to copy the faults of others in their reaſoning as well as in their practice. And even when they have been perſuaded to examine for themſelves, it is not without great difficulty that they ſee into the deception: and being preſſed with the authority of ſuch great names, they doubt and heſitate where there is no room for doubt, judge with timidity, and perhaps never truly determine. The bulk of mankind are entire ſlaves, never likely to ſee the ſenſe of Scripture, upon a number of diſputed points, farther than they are ſhewed it. They are eaſily brought to believe at firſt, and while their minds are unpoſſeſſed: but their prejudices are immortal. And, to borrow the words of an antient apologiſt for Chriſtianity, with a little variation *, "While nobody "dares to think, and all yield implicit obedience to their ſpiritual "fathers, while they know nothing of what they believe, and had "rather be dupes of other mens credulity, than truſt their own ſenſes "and judgment," the errors which have once prevailed are perpetuated; and there is no poſſible way left for bringing men back to the uncorrupted reaſonings of their own minds.

It is not therefore to ſuch men that we muſt appeal as judges of the clearneſs of Scripture, who have never doubted or examined in their lives; and who, though they hold opinions as different from each other as light and darkneſs, do not hold them upon the authority of the Bible, but upon the authority of ſuch as ſet up for their guides and interpreters. We muſt ſtudy the books themſelves, ſtudy them impartially, and examine whether any thing deſerves to be conſidered as a doctrine of revelation, which is not there taught as ſuch, and as clearly expreſſed as it can poſſibly be in any human ſyſtems. And if we do not find them there taught in this manner, our doubts will reaſonably be at an end, and the queſtion decided againſt theſe pretended doctrines; becauſe there is no medium between being revealed and not revealed. Nor can it be pretended that theſe books refer us to future creeds and councils, or order us to wait for a ſupplemental revelation of the will of God, for underſtanding that which he has given us in the ſacred writings. There is no goſpel but that which firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was after confirmed to us by them that heard it. If therefore they do not clearly teach theſe doctrines, there can be no occaſion to believe them, or to ſuppoſe that they were taught at all: eſpecially when, as I obſerved before, they are myſterious and

* Dum unuſquiſque veſtrum non cogitat—dum inconſulte geſtiunt obedire parentibus: dum fieri malunt alieni erroris acceſſio, quam ſibi credere: dum nihil ex his quæ liment, norunt, &c. Minucii Felicis Octavius, p. 151. § 24. Ed. Davies.

unintelligible, and for that reaſon requiring to be taught with the greateſt preciſion and accuracy at the very firſt, in order to prevent every miſtake, and render further explanations, becauſe they cannot but be ſuſpicious, entirely needleſs.

And though we ſhould not always be able to diſcover the full meaning of every particular paſſage of Scripture, it will not follow that the interpretations advanced by others are therefore true. Becauſe, when the writers or ſpeakers in Scripture are teaching no new or abſtruſe doctrine, nor any thing upon the perfect underſtanding of which the everlaſting happineſs of men depended, it is natural to ſuppoſe that they would often indulge their particular genius in figures and alluſions, and conſult ſtrength and energy more than preciſion of ſtile—where it muſt have been extremely difficult at firſt for any body beſides a crazy paraphraſt or fuſtian declaimer to underſtand them according to the letter. But it cannot be thought that they would teach any neceſſary doctrines in language that might eaſily be miſtaken for figure and alluſion, or that, if they barely hinted at them in theſe paſſages, they ſhould no where elſe have clearly defined them. There are, no doubt, a number of incidental phraſes and indeterminate expreſſions in Scripture, as well as in every other book that has been written, that paſt the mouth of the writers or ſpeakers without any ſpecial intention, and where they had no deſign to furniſh ground for doctrines and inferences. There can be no good reaſon for ſuppoſing, that they always ſpoke like Philoſophers or Metaphyſicians, or that they intended to dogmatize in every ſentence. Yet what is more common than to attribute theſe deſigns to them, in order to make way for our own learned diſcoveries? How often has a compariſon, a figure of rhetoric, an alluſion, an epithet, or even an idiom of ſpeech been made the foundation of ſo many ſublime myſteries?

I remember to have heard a noiſy divine of the preſent age declaim with great vehemence upon that paſſage, Exod. xxxiv. 7. *and that will by no means clear the guilty:* which, as he affirmed, contained no leſs than the whole myſtery of the Satisfaction. Becauſe it is in the original, *in clearing he will not clear* the guilty, that is to ſay, at one and the ſame time,

The Lord will *clear* and he will not,

or, to uſe the Critick's own words, *he will clear ſo as not to clear the guilty*, which without doubt is in the higheſt degree ſurprizing. How wiſely was it ordered that the Old Teſtament ſhould be written in a language, which had an idiom thus happily adapted to convey ſo great a wonder to poſterity! And, but that the knowledge of ſuch myſteries is not given to every body, one can hardly forgive our

Tranſlators

Tranſlators for depriving the world of ſuch curious information, by ſuperſtitiouſly confining themſelves to the ſenſe, and leaving the turn of expreſſion wholly unnoticed. To be ſerious, if the writers of the ſacred volume intended to inſtruct the world by ſuch conceits, it is certainly the obſcureſt book that ever was written: becauſe, till a man had loſt his ſenſes, he would never think of ſitting down to work upon an author in this manner.

Perhaps it may have been ſometimes an hindrance to the right underſtanding of Scripture, that it has been believed to be written by a divine inſpiration. I will explain what I ſay, that I may not myſelf be miſrepreſented. The high opinion which men have always entertained of theſe writings is very likely to have been one cauſe why they ſought after ſo many abſtruſe and recondite ſenſes. There was in their apprehenſion no explanation too grand and ſublime, or, as it would very often turn out, too whimſical and extravagant, to be given to theſe writings on account of their original. Every word and letter was imagined to be big with meaning, and Critics were often diſpoſed to put ſenſes upon particular paſſages there, which they would never have thought of affixing to the ſame paſſages in any human compoſition. Such interpretations would at firſt probably be ſtarted, even by the moſt adventurous genius, with caution and apology. But they gained ſtrength by time, and from being retailed over and over in diſcourſes and comments, they came in the end to be conſidered as the true and proper ſenſe of the paſſage, while the original one was kicked out in order to make room for an intruder. Though this laſt ſtep was not ſtrictly neceſſary; for it was thought that one and the ſame paſſage might be taken in five, ſix, or ſeven ſenſes, which were equally proper to it, according to the different view of the perſon who quoted it. If a book were ever ſo clear and intelligible in itſelf, would not this method of treating it in time render it completely unintelligible? Thus while men endeavoured to honour the Scripture, by attributing a number of ſenſes to it, they were in danger of bringing it into utter contempt: and by aiming to perſuade the world that it abounded with meanings, they gave ſome a pretence for objecting that it had no fixed meaning at all.

It muſt be acknowledged that the higheſt notion which has ever been advanced concerning the inſpiration of the ſacred writings ought not to have led men into this abſurd method of commenting upon them. Nor will it follow, becauſe a book has been dictated from above, that men are at liberty to indulge their fancy in the interpretation of it, and to turn and twiſt the expreſſions all manner of ways, in order to bring out every poſſible ſenſe that can be couched under

under them. On the other hand, its meaning ought to be ſuppoſed more fixed and certain, as well as more intelligible, than that of any human compoſition. For, having been written for the benefit of mankind under the direction of infinite wiſdom, it muſt undoubtedly have been fitted for their uſe. But of what uſe could it be to them, if they could never be certain that they were maſters of its meaning, and conſequently could never know what they were to believe, or how to act?—unleſs we ſhould ſay that it was the divine intention to puzzle mankind, and employ them in continual comments and exercitations upon the ſenſe of paſſages, which alone could make them wiſe unto ſalvation.

It is of conſiderable importance to learn what kind of knowledge we may expect from revelation. And for this we muſt not have recourſe to the figments of divines, but conſult our own underſtanding and the ſacred pages themſelves. Certainly it is not every doubtful opinion, which may have been a ſubject of debate to inquiſitive minds, that deſerves to be cleared up by a voice from heaven. And what advantage would it be to mankind, either as reaſonable creatures or moral agents, to have all their enquiries anſwered, and their difficulties ſolved, by the mere authority of a ſuperior being? or to have a number of true propoſitions put into their hands, the meaning of which they would be utterly unable to diſcover, and as incapable of diſcerning a ſingle ſtep by which their truth might be demonſtrated; that is, in ſhort, which had no manner of connexion either with knowledge or practice? Would any man in his ſenſes think them wiſer or better for ſuch a ſtock of ſcience? And though if ſuch propoſitions had actually come down to us from heaven, and with full evidence of their authority, we ſhould in that caſe have been bound never to call them in queſtion; —believe them, we ſhould be ſaid to do very improperly—yet certainly we can be under no obligation to ſearch for them ourſelves, and extract them out of an inſpired book with immenſe pains and labour, with a long courſe of ſyllogiſm and deduction, and giving meanings to words and ſentences which would afterwards need to be ſupported by all the invention and acuteneſs of the moſt critical brains: becauſe this would not be to receive myſteries upon the authority of God, but to make them ourſelves. And there would be a kind of impiety in this practice, as it would in a certain ſenſe be charging Chriſt and his apoſtles with fooliſhneſs, for not delivering their meaning clearly upon theſe important heads; and even pretending to be wiſer than heaven itſelf. And if we can rationally expect no diſcoveries from revelation, but ſuch as have a cloſe connection with the good conduct and the well-being of mankind, there cannot be a more ridiculous

proceeding than to wire-draw the Scriptures, and turn them about every way, in order to extract a particular ſenſe which we want to ſupport; and thus, as it were, compel them to ſpeak upon certain points, which probably they never had in view, and which no wiſe man would ever have expected them to diſcuſs.

For want of making theſe obvious reflections, how many doctrines drawn from the Bible, or rather made for it, have been advanced into articles of faith: which, though dignified with this pompous title, are in reality nothing more than ſo many propoſitions of ſcience, having no neceſſary connexion with a religious faith, or a virtuous practice? The great deſire which men had of enlarging the narrow bounds of human knowledge, probably gave riſe to theſe kind of enquiries into Scripture. But as water never riſes higher than the fountain from whence it proceeds, ſo the diſcoveries which they made in the progreſs of their enquiry were conformable to the prejudices of the age, and that imperfect philoſophy which was then in vogue. There was no ſubject of Phyſicks or Metaphyſicks, terreſtrial, celeſtial or ſuperceleſtial knowledge, but was ſuppoſed to have been ſomewhere treated and determined authoritatively by the ſacred penmen. Thus the opinions which had been imbibed in Natural Philoſophy and Aſtronomy, upon a partial view of the phenomena of nature, were ſuppoſed finally and indiſputably ſettled by the authority of God himſelf. And it was quite unſafe to treat theſe ſciences in a natural manner, or make any addition to the knowledge of mankind, for fear of falling foul upon ſome doctrine of the Church. Yet has our philoſophical knowledge been much enlarged by Syſtems of Divinity and Articles of Faith? If not, have we not reaſon enough to conclude, that this was no object of revelation? But if we are determined not to ſtir a ſtep upon any ſubject without proof from Scripture, nor receive any information concerning the motion of the heavenly bodies, the nature of the human mind, or the phenomena of the material world, but ſuch as is contained in terms in ſome part of the Bible, or to be collected from it by neceſſary conſequence, we may wander for ever in the dark; contrive new expedients to prop old ſyſtems; and, after having travelled a round of uncertainty and confuſion, return to the ſame ſpot from which we ſet out.

We have ſeen ſome perſons, out of a miſtaken notion of the perfection of Scripture, vindicate every inaccuracy of ſtile; grow ſticklers for the groſſeſt barbariſms; and be ready to call upon men to admire and commend defects, for which the utmoſt that human nature claims is pardon and indulgence. Can it be proved with any more evidence, that it was the deſign of revelation to furniſh us with a complete

ſyſtem

ſyſtem of natural and intellectual knowledge, than it was to give us a perfect model of fine writing? If not, how ill has our time been employed in drawing out and ſupporting ſuch ſyſtems; which, let them prove true or falſe, revelation is the ſame: becauſe they do not affect the main inconteſtable ſubjects of its heavenly doctrine, but only certain independent circumſtances, and part of the dreſs in which it appears to the world? To draw up Articles upon Articles, and confirm them by the moſt ſolemn acts of particular Eccleſiaſtical bodies, has ſerved to no better purpoſe, than to oppreſs mankind with an inſupportable load, and abridge that liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free.

It has been the great buſineſs of men of learning in later ages, to ſhew that a number of ſpeculations, taught upon the authority of revealed religion, have no foundation in the text of Scripture—a negative labour, which has been thrown upon them by the injudiciouſneſs and precipitancy of former divines. The chief difficulties which they have to combat in this attempt ariſe from long-eſtabliſhed prejudices; which give weight to aſſertions and arguments, that have little or none in themſelves. It would not be hard to prove that theſe ſpeculations are not deducible from the nature and reaſon of things. But this and more is freely granted them by their opponents. It is not allowed them however to argue from the incomprehenſibleneſs of ſuch doctrines to reaſon, either that they were not fit ſubjects for revelation, or that they may not have been taught in paſſages which will evidently, without the leaſt violence, bear a very different meaning. For this reaſon they are often obliged to enlarge upon particular paſſages of Scripture, and to canvaſs words and ſentences with a critical nicety; in order to ſhew, that general concluſions will not follow from particular premiſes, that when one point has been proved and another taken for granted, the concluſion from both is far from being eſtabliſhed, and ſometimes perhaps to correct groſſer blunders than theſe. If they generally ſay too much upon theſe occaſions for thinking perſons, it is almoſt always too little for the prejudices and paſſions of the bulk of mankind.

Nor do they think it fair to employ thoſe arts of controverſy which have been adopted without ſcruple by others. To drown objections with the cry of hereſy, to ſilence adverſaries by raiſing a clamour againſt their perſons or ſentiments, and to conſign them over for conviction to the judgment of the Magiſtrate in this world, or of God Almighty in the next, they think as little allowed to them in the character of Chriſtians as of Philoſophers. They would not

defend any particular truths of the goſpel, though ever ſo important, with ſuch mad zeal, as to betray the religion which they mean to ſupport; nor ſtickle for the peculiarities of any one ſect of believers in ſuch a manner, as to render it impoſſible they ſhould at the ſame time be Chriſtians. They wiſh to fulfil all the precepts of Chriſtian charity as well as zeal; and not like many, whoſe zeal has far outrun their wiſdom, to ſtand in need of an indulgence in their own caſe, which they have ever denied to others, and be obliged to ſue for an intereſt in that charitable prayer, which was once put up for mad mercileſs Bigots, by the greateſt Miracle of candour and patience which the world ever ſaw, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

A

PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION.

THE doctrine of a reſurrection is one of the grand ſupports of the goſpel, and neceſſary to eſtabliſh the credibility of its other promiſes. The language of Chriſt is, *he that believeth on me hath everlaſting life*, John vi. 47. but men continue mortal, notwithſtanding they embrace the goſpel, and conform to its rules: the precepts of Chriſtianity help us to live in the beſt manner, but not to live for ever; the ſtricteſt and moſt undeviating virtue cannot alter the ſettled laws of nature. The divine power alone can reverſe its own conſtitution, ſo as to free us from the neceſſity of dying, or reſtore us to life, after it has been taken away. But Chriſtianity ſecures to us no ſuch exemption as the former; I ſay *ſecures to us*, becauſe though it be uncertain on whom it will fall, yet it muſt happen, that ſome will entirely eſcape death. Such as are alive in the laſt age of the world, and at the coming of Chriſt, ſhall enter into his kingdom without dying, and exchange at once a corruptible for an incorruptible ſtate: of whom, though they quit *this* life and every thing that is mortal, yet on account of the inſtantaneous change they undergo, it cannot be ſo properly ſaid, that they die, as, in the expreſſive phraſe of the Apoſtle, that *mortality is ſwallowed up of life*, 2 Cor. v. 4. This however is a privilege, which does not extend beyond a ſingle age, and cannot be the expectation of all mankind: it cannot poſſibly concern thoſe who are already dead, and are probably the far more numerous part of the whole race of men: it cannot intereſt ſuch as are now living, with any degree of certainty. We may prefer the condition of an uninterrupted life, we may wiſh to eſcape dying, we may deſire with the Apoſtle *not to be uncloathed but to be cloathed upon:* but the only perſuaſion which our preſent circumſtances will admit to eaſe the mind, and remove every apprehenſion, is, that *though this earthly houſe of our tabernacle ſhould be diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, 2 Cor. v. 1. We muſt, for our greater aſſurance, recur to the promiſe of our Saviour, *he who believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live* again, *John* xi. 25. And to what is ſaid by the Apoſtle, *for to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living*, Rom. xiv. 9. *that whether we wake or ſleep*, at the time of his coming, *we ſhould live together with him*, 1 Theſſ. v. 10. We need not wonder then to ſee the Apoſtle ſtrenuouſly maintaining a doctrine which is ſo neceſſary to our ſatisfaction and hope. He is pleading, at once,

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his own cauſe and the cauſe of his fellow apoſtles, the common cauſe of Chriſtians, the cauſe of all the virtuous dead in every age and nation, in fine, the cauſe of the divine juſtice, mercy, and veracity. There never was a falſe doctrine, which crept into the church of God, more immediately ſubverſive of the *goſpel*, more contrary to the tenour of its promiſes, than this, which ſeems to have been in danger of ſpreading among the Corinthians, that there is *no reſurrection of the dead*. Other opinions may affect its ſplendour, and eclipſe *part* of its light: but this, once admitted, plunges us in total darkneſs. It leaves us nothing to hope from the miſſion and exaltation of the Son of God; or, at leaſt, confines the rewards of the goſpel to a few who ſhall happen to be alive at his coming: inſtead of producing a noble ſuperiority to the world, it reconciles us to it as our portion and hope; inſtead of teaching us to contemn the preſent life, and ſacrifice it, if needs be, to religion or the publick welfare, it leads us to cheriſh it as our only chance for happineſs, and that without which a good conſcience can neither be felt nor rewarded.

It will be enquired who was the author of this ſentiment, and what notions he or his party could form of Chriſtianity upon ſo ſtrange an hypotheſis: for they continued to make profeſſion of it, and probably might not in ſecret doubt the truth of the goſpel; nor does the apoſtle, notwithſtanding their error, treat them upon the foot of apoſtates. We may wonder perhaps how any men could hold Chriſtianity, and yet reject the doctrine of a reſurrection. But it is to be conſidered that in thoſe early times, when as yet there was no written rule of faith, and the truths of Chriſtianity were not become ſo familiar to its converts, it was more eaſy for thoſe who appeared under the character of preachers of the goſpel, if they were ſo diſpoſed, to abuſe the credulity of unwary minds. We might with greater reaſon call in queſtion the ſincerity of the propagator of this doctrine, who could ground it upon no divine authority. And the point would be decided, if we could be certain that he pretended to receive what he taught by expreſs revelation, and not as an opinion which had been long embraced, and of ſufficient authority on account of the perſons who firſt maintained it, in ſhort, as the favourite ſpeculation of a *party*, who generally hold their own peculiarities as ſacred as any truths of divine original. I am the more inclined to think this latter might be the caſe, becauſe it appears that ſeveral perſons went about preaching the goſpel at that time, without a ſpecial appointment to the office, and without any other furniture than a general knowledge of the facts upon which Chriſtianity was built, the miſſion, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of the Son of God: who, having no explicit knowledge of the goſpel ſcheme, could only ſpeak of it conformably to the notions they had before entertained of the moral government of God, and the kingdom of his Meſſiah. Such was *Apollos, who was inſtructed in the way of the Lord, and, being fervent in ſpirit, ſpoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptiſm of John:* but was afterwards more perfectly informed by Aquila and Priſcilla concerning *the way of Chriſt*, Acts xviii. 24, 25. They were for the moſt part Jews, zealous for the law and their numerous traditions; and, to ſpeak of them in the language of the apoſtle, *being ignorant of the righteouſneſs of God*, or what he required of men under the goſpel, *went about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs*, and by teaching men to obſerve the law of *Moſes* were in a fair way to introduce confuſion and ſlavery into the churches of Chriſt. It does not appear however that the choſen

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apoſtles of Chriſt were at all diſpleaſed with theſe voluntary preachers, or diſcouraged them in the diſcharge of their office, where they taught nothing inconſiſtent with Chriſtian liberty and ſound morals: and it is with an air of ſatisfaction and triumph that St. Paul ſpeaks in one place of ſo many attempts to ſpread the religion of his maſter, though they did not all proceed from the beſt and moſt diſintereſted motives, *Phil.* i. 18. But it ſeems to be done with a view to diſtinguiſh himſelf from them, where it was neceſſary to aſſert his authority, and correct the errors into which Chriſtians had fallen by their means, that he ſtiles himſelf *an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, by the commandment of God, not of men nor by men, but by the will of God, and of Chriſt whom he raiſed from the dead, called to be an apoſtle, and ſeparated to the goſpel of God*, (as may be ſeen in the introductions to moſt of his epiſtles) for this was what his opponents did not and could not pretend to. If then we ſuppoſe the perſon we are ſpeaking of to be one of theſe voluntary miſſionaries, a Jew, and, as Mr. Locke reaſonably conjectures, of the ſect of the Sadducees, we ſee at once the grounds upon which he ſet himſelf up againſt the apoſtle, as a preacher of Chriſtianity equally with him (though not ſet apart by a divine call) and of his oppoſition to the doctrine of a reſurrection, which was openly denied by his whole party.

The Sadducees were not a ſet of Jewiſh infidels, as we may be apt to conſider them. They acknowledged the divine miſſion of *Moſes*, and ſubmitted to his authority as a lawgiver: and, which is much in their favour, they rejected the traditions of the elders, and all that ſenſeleſs heap of ſuperſtitions which is built upon oral teſtimony and a kind of faith that will ſwallow the moſt extravagant abſurdities. They differed from the Phariſees in ſome other points, denying the exiſtence of angels and ſpirits, together with the reſurrection of the dead; which laſt was no explicit doctrine of the Moſaic revelation. It may be enough to ſatisfy us of this, if we had no other proofs, that our Lord argues with them only by conſequence, from the writings of the Jewiſh lawgiver, *Matth.* xxii. 29. And he does not condemn them as rejecting the Scriptures, but as unacquainted with their full meaning, and ignorant of the great power of God. We may therefore ſafely conclude that it was a doctrine rather hinted at than revealed, and left to be gathered by deduction and inference rather than made an explicit part of the divine promiſe: agreeably to what the writer to the Hebrews obſerves, that *the way into the holieſt of all was not made manifeſt while the firſt tabernacle was ſtanding*, Heb. ix. 8.

This ſect was neither large nor popular; and, as Joſephus informs us, conſiſted chiefly of perſons of rank and power; which is eaſy enough to be conceived, when we remember that it ſupported an opinion ſo favourable to the oppreſſions of the great, and to that practical principle by which they have moſt religiouſly ſquared their conduct, that the world and all things in it were made for them. The ſpeculation however which diſtinguiſhed their ſect ſeems to have had a very innocent original; and, if we may credit the accounts which are given us, owed its riſe to a precept of one *Antigonus*, a Jewiſh doctor, which he inculcated frequently upon his ſcholars, that "God ſhould not be obeyed with a view to any reward." A piece of refinement in morality which is entirely falſe and unnatural. It ſhall be inſiſted upon as much as any advocate for this opinion can deſire, that virtue is to be honoured and loved for its own ſake, that God muſt be obeyed becauſe it is right, and becauſe his commandments are juſt and good:

good: yet is it not alſo another reaſon why we ſhould love and embrace virtue, that it is profitable to us, and a neceſſary inſtrument of happineſs? As man is a compound being, and is not only formed with a love of what is right and excellent, and furniſhed with the ideas of gratitude and duty; but has likewiſe interwoven in his frame a love of life, a care of his own preſervation, and a ſtrong deſire of happineſs, ſo as to be governed by hopes and fears as much as by moral motives; what hinders but that there may be ſeveral ſprings of obedience, and that this deſire of well-being may conſpire with the reſt in the diſcipline of his mind, and aid the growth of more liberal and exalted principles? And if the conſtitution of nature be favourable to right conduct, ſo that, in the ordinary courſe of things, integrity and the government of our paſſions is a greater ſource of enjoyment than any vicious indulgencies; or if, in taking the moſt enlarged view of human exiſtence, ſuch be the ſcheme and tendency of the divine government, that it ſhall be better, upon the whole, with the righteous than with the wicked, in point of intereſt and pleaſure; it ſeems that no virtue whatſoever requires us to neglect ſuch conſiderations: unleſs indeed that ſhould be reckoned an imperfection and fault in men at preſent, which would be inſeparable from them in a ſtate of innocence, or the moſt advanced virtue, namely to deſire and ſeek after happineſs. Does religion exclude all ſelf-love, and oblige us to diveſt ourſelves of a neceſſary part of our conſtitution? Nay more, if it be agreeable to the perfections of the univerſal Ruler to provide rewards for ſuch as have been faithful and aſſiduous in the labours appointed them; and not only as the friend of righteouſneſs, but as the parent of intelligent beings, who deſires their victory and happineſs, to look down upon, encourage, and hold forth a crown to contending virtue, it ſeems unjuſt and ungrateful not to eye the propitious hand, and bordering too much upon empty arrogance, altogether to diſdain thoſe motives, which the wiſdom of Heaven has not thought improper, to quicken the languor, or increaſe the zeal, of half-indolent and fainting mortals. And this reſpect to a future recompenſe (which though not neceſſarily a virtue, is certainly a branch of wiſdom, and acting ſtrictly according to nature) may, in particular circumſtances, become virtuous, and rival the moſt diſintereſted acts of goodneſs; as when it is the effect of a deliberate truſt in the Judge of the univerſe; a thorough acquieſcence in his government, and care of the virtuous; a firm perſuaſion of his rectitude, clemency, and faithfulneſs, inducing a belief, whether we argue from his nature or promiſes, that he is *the rewarder of ſuch as faithfully ſeek him*, and diſpoſing us at all times to juſtify his ways, and to commend ourſelves, in well-doing, to him who judges righteouſly: and thus, being not more an act of prudence than of piety, it acquires a nobler nature and title, and is dignified with the name of religious faith, the firſt duty of rational beings, and firm bond of virtue, private, ſocial, and divine. It is in this view that we find the conduct of Moſes celebrated, *Heb.* xi. 24, &c. who, by faith, deſpiſing the ſplendor of a court, and the proſpect of a royal inheritance, choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, and counted the reproach of his Meſſiah greater riches than the treaſures in Egypt, *becauſe he had reſpect to the recompenſe of reward.* And this is, in an eſpecial and diſtinguiſhing manner, the faith of a Chriſtian, who, aided by a more explicit knowledge of the perfections of God and the views of his government, by means of this ſhort creed, *God is faithful who has*

promiſed,

promiſed, riſes ſuperior to the temptations and evils of life, and becomes acceptable to God, the true diſciple of Jeſus, and heir of the kingdom of righteouſneſs, for which he looks and hopes.

But to return—From the ſentiment which I have been conſidering, that we muſt not ſerve God with a view to any reward (which ſeems to be juſt only upon the ſuppoſition that there is no reward) ſome of the ſcholars of *Antigonus*, among whom was *Sadoc*, founder of the ſect of the Sadducees, concluded that in fact there was none; and therefore taught that there was no reſurrection from the dead, but that the actions and expectations of men terminated altogether with the preſent life. Excepting the above-mentioned peculiarities, their opinions were conformable to thoſe of other Jews. They had the expectation of a Meſſiah to come, in common with the reſt of the people; and would with much more reaſon aſſume, that his kingdom was purely of a temporal nature, differing in nothing, but its extent and greatneſs, from the other empires of the world. And after his death and reſurrection, when they ſaw their prince removed out of the world, before he had fulfilled the expectations of men, and reſtored the kingdom to Iſrael; they could only believe, without rejecting their former principles, that he would appear again, when it ſhould pleaſe God, to execute the councils of heaven; and raiſe his favourites to thoſe honours, which, though ſhort and periſhing, were the higheſt which God could beſtow, or man receive, during the narrow period of his exiſtence here.

That the Sadducean Chriſtians at Corinth did admit the reſurrection of Chriſt, at the ſame time that they denied that of the dead in general, is highly probable upon ſeveral accounts. The apoſtle allows that they had aſſented to this, together with the other facts upon which Chriſtianity was founded; nor does he any where charge them with having renounced this part of their faith. And he argues upon the reſurrection of Chriſt, as a conceſſion which would be made to him, in order to ſhew the abſurdity of the other opinion, which they had embraced; a fact which he would hardly have employed, as a ſtep to the proof of another doctrine, if he had been aware that they were ready to conteſt its truth; but have inſiſted principally and immediately upon the proof of this, and laboured to remove the ſource and occaſion of their incredulity. Neither is it likely that they ſhould at all have embraced, or continued to profeſs the Chriſtian faith, unleſs the reſurrection of Chriſt had been atteſted and confirmed to their ſatisfaction. It was notorious that Jeſus of Nazareth had been apprehended, and put to death. It was equally certain, that he had not, during his life, fulfilled all the predictions, which, however they were to be underſtood, they judged ought to be accompliſhed in the Meſſiah. How then could they receive him for their Prince, and the Holy One of God, without theſe characters? and how could they expect the remainder of the prophecies, to be accompliſhed by him, who was held under the power of death, and upon their principles muſt be held ſo for ever? They could not but diſcern the force of that part of the apoſtle's argument, *if Chriſt be not raiſed, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your ſins*, and can have no reaſonable hope of divine favour, or ſalvation, to be communicated to you, by the perſon who, as our religion teaches, has been appointed of God for this purpoſe.

We have no reaſon to think, becauſe the Sadducees rejected the hope of a reſurrection, and of any external marks of the divine approbation to the virtuous,

that therefore they had ſuch refined notions of the Meſſiah's kingdom, as to perſuade themſelves, that it only conſiſted in carrying their morals to a greater height of perfection, in multiplying the occaſions of auſterity, ſelf-denial, and mortification, and exerciſing their integrity and patience, by worldly diſcouragements and perſecution. They were not men of this character: if they believed that we muſt ſerve God for nought, it does not appear that they were ready to do a great deal for him. And as the more juſt conceptions of the Phariſees, concerning the divine government, did very little towards removing their prejudices, when they came to reaſon upon the nature of his new diſpenſation, and the character of the perſon who was to introduce it; ſo neither was it to be expected, that the contrary belief ſhould operate much in the Sadducees, upon thoſe apprehenſions which ſeem to have been common and uniform throughout the nation. Both parties expected a kingdom under the Meſſiah, and both a temporal kingdom.

Do we wonder that men ſhould maintain ſuch inconſiſtencies? To deny a reſurrection altogether, and admit it in a ſingle inſtance! What falſe opinion is there which does not ſomewhere imply an inconſiſtency, though it may not appear to thoſe who defend it? And who ever held an opinion which appeared to *him* to involve a contradiction? But is this too glaring to impoſe itſelf upon the human mind? Perhaps they did not view the two caſes in a ſimilar light, and had not the ſame kind of objections to the one as to the other. They might admit the reſurrection of Chriſt, as being neceſſary on account of the divine promiſe, and the accompliſhment of predictions, which muſt otherwiſe fall to the ground; and yet refuſe to acknowledge it of all mankind, becauſe this could only take place for the ſake of a retribution, which it was a fundamental article of their creed to deny. Nor were the caſes equal in their apprehenſions with reſpect to the divine power and the poſſibility of the fact, if I may expreſs it thus; I ſpeak of reſtoring life to a body which had not lain three whole days in the grave, and the collecting and reuniting the different particles of the human frame, which had been ſcattered over the face of the world, and mingled with all the elements. For ſome ſuch miſtake concerning the nature of a reſurrection, which the apoſtle endeavours to correct, it is probable might give riſe to the queſtion which they put to him, not for the ſake of information, as I have obſerved in its place, but by way of ſcoff, and to render the doctrine of a reſurrection ridiculous, *with what bodies do they come?*

It is not difficult to conceive, in what light the hope of the goſpel muſt be conſidered by thoſe who denied a reſurrection of the dead, and that which Chriſtianity joins to it, and is only rational in ſuch connection, the aſſumption of the living to a ſtate of immortality. For ſince theſe two points, which are ſo clearly taught by Chriſt and his apoſtles, diſtinguiſh the true ſalvation of the goſpel, from the groundleſs expectations of prejudiced Jews, and reſtrain it to *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens*; to the hope of which we are *begotten again*, as the Scripture expreſſes it, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt; thoſe men, who granted the truth of his reſurrection, but did not allow it to be the foundation of this better hope, muſt, if they expected any thing from their Meſſiah, neceſſarily recur to the vain conceits which the goſpel had exploded, and content themſelves with the expectation of a temporary, uncertain, happineſs. I call it temporary, becauſe, whatever

ever were its nature, it muſt be confined to the preſent, tranſitory life of men; I call it uncertain, becauſe they could have no knowledge when it would take place, and, unleſs they could be aſſured of an endleſs exiſtence, it muſt always be matter of doubt and uncertainty, whether they themſelves ſhould have any part in it. Thus the two conſequences which the apoſtle charges upon them follow directly and evidently from their opinion. *Then they who are fallen aſleep in Chriſt are* altogether *periſhed*, on ſuppoſition that the dead never riſe. And as to thoſe who remain, *if in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable*, being perpetually diſtracted with fears and apprehenſions; or rather expoſed by the common calamities of life, and the ſuperadded afflictions and perſecutions which our religion draws upon us, to the almoſt certain loſs of the only chance that is left us for being partakers of the goſpel ſalvation.

It appears from hence, that the apoſtle might have confuted the error of the Corinthians, by urging theſe abſurd conſequences alone; and without intereſting the truth of the goſpel, and the grand foundation of it, the reſurrection of Chriſt, in the debate. But he chuſes to carry his argument further, and, notwithſtanding any nice diſtinctions they might pretend to make between the two caſes, ſuppoſes, as he juſtly might, that if a general reſurrection of the dead were not an effect within the compaſs of Almighty power, nor an expectation which we could reaſonably form, from the divine righteouſneſs and clemency, we might, with equal reaſon, call in queſtion the truth of Chriſt's reſurrection, if we refuſed to acknowledge thoſe perfections in the Deity, which are as eſſential to the production of one event as of the other. He therefore aſſerts, upon ſuch a ſuppoſition, that the goſpel is a falſehood, their faith an illuſion, and that all the expectations they had formed, upon an apprehenſion of its being true and well-founded, muſt prove no better than an idle dream. But the very form of his argument implies, that he had ſome hope of drawing them out of their error, by the medium to which he had recourſe; and that he did not deſpair of them, as having abſolutely rejected the goſpel. To ſay, *if there be no reſurrection of the dead, then is not Chriſt raiſed, and your faith is vain*, is very pertinently urged to Chriſtians, in order to ſhew the neceſſity of admitting a general reſurrection; but we muſt own, that this argument would not be the moſt happily choſen to convert an infidel, who makes no ſcruple of rejecting both the propoſitions.

By treating their error in this way, the apoſtle ſecures two conſiderable points towards their conviction. Firſt, that, upon a ſuppoſition there is no reſurrection of the dead, Chriſtianity cannot be true; becauſe the reſurrection of Chriſt, the foundation on which it is built, would be taken away: ſecondly, that granting this fact might ſtand as it did, and that as to external evidence their religion ſhould continue the ſame, yet there were other reaſons ſufficient to deſtroy its credibility; ſince, in their view of it, it was a ſcheme diſhonourable to God, and ruinous to ſuch as embraced it; leaving them ſtript of all encouragement and ſupport, and, by the ſufferings to which they were expoſed on account of their faith, in a much worſe condition than they were without it. But it was contrary to common ſenſe to believe, that God ſhould ſo particularly interpoſe in behalf of religion and virtue, and afterward permit ſuch as obeyed his call, and forſook the vices and corruptions of the world, to be, finally and upon the whole, as to external circumſtances, the moſt depreſſed and calamitous of man-

kind. He has likewiſe an opportunity of triumphing, from the teſtimony which he and the reſt of the apoſtles had borne to the reſurrection of *Jeſus*; which muſt have been altogether falſe, a direct contradiction to the truth of God and the conviction of their own minds, if there was no ſuch thing as a reſurrection from the dead. And here we can hardly fail to draw an inference, as has been often done, in favour of Chriſtianity, from the witneſs which the firſt preachers of it have borne to the truth of the facts upon which it is founded; together with the conſciouſneſs which they ſhewed, on all occaſions, of their own integrity, and the goodneſs of their cauſe; and their being ſo firmly perſuaded that it was morally impoſſible that they ſhould be conſidered in the light of impoſtors, as to venture to oppoſe the innocence of their own characters, as one of the ſtrongeſt arguments they could employ, to convince a party which was formed againſt them, of the errors into which they were unhappily fallen. Such an abſurdity did it appear in their eyes, for any man to conceive, that they had, out of mere gaiety of heart, gone about to impoſe upon the world, in a matter where they had no intereſt at all; and chearfully ſuffered the greateſt calamities in *defence* of a *falſehood*, which none but the moſt abandoned minds were capable of maintaining in order to avoid them.

From all this the apoſtle concludes, both that *Chriſt was indeed riſen, and become the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept*, or that all the dead in Chriſt ſhould riſe, after the example of their glorified head, which laſt is the point he had propoſed to prove. His argument is wholly grounded upon the abſurdities, which muſt follow from ſuppoſing the truth of the contrary opinion. He does not enter into any metaphyſical diſquiſitions concerning the limits of the divine power, the nature of life and death, or the paſſage from one to the other; nor offer any direct proof of the certainty or *poſſibility* of a reſurrection: but he has ſhewn ſuch conſequences to be deducible from the ſentiment he intends to refute, as nothing but the downright *impoſſibility* of a reſurrection will authorize us to admit. Who can endure to hear of ſo many noble minds, the ornaments of human nature, and ſupports of righteouſneſs, in the age in which they lived, periſhing for ever, by the malice and cruelty of the worſt of men? or think, with patience, of the unchecked triumphs of the wicked, the final oppreſſion of virtue and deſtruction of the work of God? What trifling difficulties, upon the ſubject of a reſurrection, deſerve to be weighed againſt the filial and pious hope of ſouls allied to heaven; againſt the order of the univerſe, and the truth of the Almighty?

I can, by no means, perſuade myſelf, that the perſons to whom St. *Paul* is writing, held the immortality of the ſoul and a ſtate of retribution; and that the only diſpute, which he has with them, is concerning the reſurrection of the body (as this doctrine is generally underſtood among Chriſtians) and its reunion with the ſoul at the coming of Chriſt. I loſe, upon this ſtate of the queſtion, all the force and conſequence of his argument. I diſcern no reaſon he has to give up the dead in Chriſt for loſt, or to deplore the living as the moſt calamitous and hopeleſs of mankind. What! are thoſe beings loſt, who, freed from the dark priſon of their bodies, rove through boundleſs tracts of ſpace, and enjoy a life that is pure, ſpiritual, and exalted? Is it juſt to affirm concerning ſuch unembodied ſpirits, who are aſſimilated to angels and the bleſſed inhabitants of Paradiſe; and, having dropt all the groſs corporeal particles, which before clogged

clogged their minds, and were the ſeeds of ſo much pain and diſorder, then alone begin *truly* to *live* (for in ſuch terms, I think, we deſcribe the ſtate of ſouls eſcaped from their bodies, and entered upon the manſions of ſpiritual delight) is it juſt, I ſay, to affirm of ſuch beings that they are *periſhed?* or of men, who live in expectation of ſo much happineſs, and by their piety towards the Creator of all things, and virtue toward mankind, have the beſt pretenſions to this exalted life, that they are of *all the moſt miſerable?* What idea muſt we affix to the word *periſhed?* Muſt we underſtand it as *Plutarch*, who, writing on the ſubject of death, in a treatiſe againſt *Epicurus*, to ſhew that we cannot live, even in pleaſure, upon the principles of that philoſopher, ſays, "But men "univerſally ſtart, as at ſomething gloomy and horrible, at thoſe repreſenta- "tions of death, which deſcribe it as a ſtate of ignorance, oblivion, and utter "inſenſibility; and are confounded at ſuch expreſſions as theſe, he is *periſhed*, "he is deſtroyed, he is no more in being. Και προς το απολωλε, και το ανηρη- "ται, και το ουκ εστι παραστησαι." Op. Mor. p. 254. l. 7. Baſ. 1582. Or is this ſenſe too harſh, and muſt we believe that they are in a ſtate of puniſhment? But I will ſhew preſently that this cannot have place. Nothing remains then but to ſuppoſe, that theſe ſeparate ſpirits are in circumſtances of uneaſineſs and ſollicitude from themſelves, diſtreſſed, we may imagine, by a kind of ſympathetick feeling, till they are reunited to their bodies; and that the various pleaſures, with which they are ſurrounded in this new abode, are not ſtrong enough to overcome their grief, as long as they continue ſeparated from their wonted companions, and partners of all their employments, cares, and delights. But then the ſtate of ſeparate ſouls is much leſs perfect and deſireable, than we uſually deſcribe it; and, inſtead of being *far better*, it is vaſtly inferior to the preſent life, if ſuch as are entered upon it may be ſaid to have periſhed, unleſs there be a reſurrection of the body. Though truly it had need be of ſome conſiderable importance to our ſtate of being hereafter, for the apoſtle to lay ſo much ſtreſs upon it, as he does in the paſſage above cited. And what, but the abſolute neceſſity of ſuch a reunion, ſhould move him to ſet ſo many ſprings to work, and, as we might almoſt ſay, put heaven and earth in commotion, to carry a point, which, if referred to the ſuffrage of a conſiderable part of the philoſophers, both ancient and modern, is rather unfavourable to the perfection and happineſs of intellectual beings. This I ſay upon ſuppoſition that he is ſpeaking merely of a reſurrection of the body, and not of *men* themſelves being reſtored to life by the power of Jeſus Chriſt.

But it will be ſaid, perhaps, that I have not given a fair ſtate of the queſtion, and have overlooked the chief point, upon which the apoſtle's diſcourſe depends; that his concluſion turns upon the reſurrection of Chriſt, and not upon the reſurrection of the dead in general; and that becauſe, upon his adverſaries principles, Chriſt is not raiſed, and not merely becauſe the dead riſe not, he concludes that *they who are fallen aſleep in Chriſt are periſhed.* I am far from being convinced that this is a juſt repreſentation, or that the mention of Chriſt's reſurrection was at all neceſſary to ſuch a concluſion; and am inclined to believe, that the apoſtle introduces it here (beſides the connection which it has with the proof of our own reſurrection) to ſhew that we have no hope in Chriſt at all, not even in this life (which the Corinthians might probably entertain, as we have ſhewn above) upon their principles; or, in other words, that the Chriſtian

faith was an idle fiction, a mere nonentity, which could only be embraced by designing knaves or easy fools, unless a resurrection and life to come were admitted. But I will not insist upon this; but go on to prove, that, granting them as much as they require, the concession will not in the least help their hypothesis, or serve to clear up the argument we are now examining.

If there be no life to come, the gospel is without controversy an imposture, because it has so fully asserted this doctrine. But if there be a life to come, though the gospel should at the same time be false, it will by no means follow, that all who die in the faith of Christ must everlastingly perish. Let me, without offence, for a moment only, suppose that the Christian religion deserves no more credit than the many superstitions which have abused mankind, by turns, with a fictitious authority; that the facts, upon which it is built, are either highly dubious or notoriously false; and its promises as vain as the writings which contain them: I ask, upon this supposition, are the men who, yet fondly tenacious of its truth, form their hearts and lives by the model of its precepts, in a worse state than they who *in every nation and land fear God and work righteousness?* Is it a superstition so uncommonly detestable, so plainly repugnant to the attributes and government of God, that nothing can render the belief of it *safe*, except the single circumstance, which we must then necessarily reject, of its being authentic and divine? or do we rather maintain, that all men, who have been carried away, however innocently, with the false religions and corrupted doctrines of the world, shall be involved in one common condemnation; and that none but philosophers and freethinkers shall *inherit the kingdom of God?* Hard indeed would be the lot of human beings, if involuntary ignorance and error, which, before the most partial judges, might pass for some sort of alleviation of the worst of conduct, must draw down ruin upon those, who have excelled in real virtue, and in every thing which is acceptable to God, and approved of men. If Christ be not raised, I grant that we have no hope left us, as *Christians*; but if there be a life to come, though the doctrine of a resurrection, and consequently of Christianity itself, be false; I cannot believe that all such as have died in the faith of Christ are perished, without admitting one of two very great absurdities; either, that all mankind will be equally punished in a future state; or that Christians alone, of all the religious parties which have divided the world, whatever have been their character and conduct, shall, for this reason alone, because they were *Christians*, be numbered with Transgressors and evil doers; and, as such, be excluded for ever, from the favour and presence of the Parent of the universe.

I know of but one more state of the question which can be given, in order to evade my conclusion, and which has, in part, been adopted by some men of considerable reputation in the learned world; namely, that the apostle's discourse is not concerning *Christians in general*, who have died, but of such in particular, as had borne testimony to the truth of Christianity, and the resurrection of Christ; whom he joins with himself in the preceding verse, and of whom many were fallen asleep; and therefore he asserts that they were perished, as having been false witnesses against God, if there be no resurrection, and Christ be not raised. But there is very little appearance of probability in this. The words are far from being characteristic of false witnesses and deceivers: on the contrary, *they that are in Christ, the dead in Christ, and those who sleep in Jesus*, are phrases

which he continually applies to ſuch as have lived and died in the *faith* of Chriſt. But granting, what is not yet proved, that they might be underſtood otherwiſe here, and that the ſenſe is to be ſupplied out of the former verſe, in this manner, καὶ ἡμεῖς οἱ ſc. ἐψευδομάρτυρες ἐσμὲν vel ἐψευδομαρτυρήσαμεν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀπολωλότος, "then alſo thoſe of us who have teſtified the truth of Chriſt's reſurrection, "and are gone down to the grave with this guilt upon their heads, are pe-"riſhed;" upon this, I anſwer, that the apoſtle has advanced an argument which concludes nothing at all to his purpoſe. For who will make any difficulty of allowing him, that deceivers and falſe witneſſes are periſhed? What is there, in this inference, that is levelled againſt his adverſaries; or which might not be true, whether there be or be not a reſurrection? He argues with great force and preciſion in the foregoing verſe, "then alſo we are found "falſe witneſſes of God, becauſe we have teſtified that he raiſed up Chriſt "from the dead; whom he has not raiſed, if the dead riſe not:" becauſe his own character, and the character of the other apoſtles and witneſſes to the truth of this event, ſtood as yet unimpeached; and becauſe it implied a real abſurdity, and contradiction to all the principles by which the mind of man is governed, to ſuppoſe that they had maintained ſo great a falſhood, without any proſpect of honour or advantage, and at the expence of every thing which could be dear to them, as rational beings and members of the human ſociety. And he might have proceeded further, and have ſhewn, if he had pleaſed, with the ſame ſtrength of argument, that many of theſe witneſſes had left the world, without retracting the teſtimony which they had borne during their lives, though they had ſuffered grievouſly for their adherence to it; and ſome of them, perhaps, died as martyrs; a firmneſs leaſt of all to be expected from knaves and hypocrites. But when ſpeaking of them as impoſtors, and laying it down as the ground of his argument, that they had deceived the world, as he muſt do upon the ſuppoſition which we are now conſidering, to add, after this, that *they are periſhed*, is drawing no concluſion in favour of his argument; but rather betraying a cauſe which he might have glorioufly defended. Whatever reluctance his adverſaries might have felt, to admit that they were impoſtors, yet, if this be once ſuppoſed, no abſurdity will follow from granting them to have periſhed: for, it is the very thing which ought to be, upon every ſcheme that can be imagined. And how could they fail of replying to him: "You ſay that they "are periſhed. Well, and have they not met with the fate which they de-"ſerved? What do you think to have gained by this inference? did you "expect to raiſe our indignation, or ſurprize? is it a thing ſo very new and "uncommon, that impoſtors ſhould periſh? or ſo very contrary to the juſtice "and impartiality of the Divine Being, that we muſt grant a reſurrection, in "order that ſuch men as theſe may be reſtored to life and happineſs?"

I think it muſt appear plain to every body, that the apoſtle gains nothing to his cauſe, if he be indeed ſpeaking here of impoſtors, by alledging that they have periſhed. His argument at leaſt requires that the perſons he is ſpeaking of be ſuppoſed innocent, ſincere and honeſt in the faith they eſpouſed, and in which they died. And it will be much ſtrengthened, if we ſuppoſe, further, that the faith which they embraced was of divine original, and conſequently that they were called, as I may ſay, by the voice of God himſelf, to thoſe hardſhips and ſufferings which they endured for the ſake of the goſpel. By

this.

this he gains two very considerable points, towards convincing the persons, who were fallen into this error, concerning a resurrection; first, the exciting compassion for those, who, if they have perished, have perished undeservedly, and then raising aversion to an opinion which is clogged with such odious consequences. He adds, with the same view, that *if we have hope in Christ only in this life, we are of all men the most worthy of compassion.*

But if it be not very probable, that the apostle should defend a resurrection of the body, by such arguments as these, it is still less likely, that his adversaries should object merely to this article, as it is supposed, of the Christian faith. If Mr. Lock's conjecture be just, it was a Sadducee, who set up for a leader of the new faction, and was the grand promoter of the disturbances and errors in the Corinthian church. There are reasons enough, from these two epistles to the Corinthians, as well as from the nature of the case, to persuade us that the opposition proceeded, originally, from some one or other of the Jews, who were at all times indefatigable in their attempts, to bring into discredit the character and labours of the apostle of the Gentiles, and introduce their doctrines and traditions into the church of Christ. And who should teach and patronize the sentiment, we are now speaking of, but a Sadducee? The Pharisees, it is well known, were so zealous for the hope of a resurrection, as to side with the *apostle* upon a particular occasion, when their favourite opinion was brought into the debate, *Acts* xxiii. 9. Now whatever mistaken apprehensions the Sadducees might entertain, concerning the *manner* of a resurrection of the dead, and however they might object at times to the doctrine, from the corruption of the body, the entire dissolution and alteration of its parts; yet the grand reason for which they rejected it, was, as we before observed, because it was the prelude to a future life, and a state of retribution. What appearance then is there that any of them should admit the very point which first led them to deny a resurrection, "the hope of a life to come;" and then cavil about a circumstance, that is quite immaterial to the scheme which they had adopted? For when they have once admitted, that men are capable of sensation, and consequently of rewards and punishments, after this life, and before a resurrection; the grand difficulty about the resurrection of the dead instantly ceases; and the distinction between them and the Pharisees is lost under an empty name. And, according to the account which *Josephus* gives us of the different sects of the Jews, the Pharisees maintained a resurrection of the body as little as the Sadducees. For, believing the soul's immortality, they believed that the souls of good men alone removed into *other* bodies, while those of the wicked were punished everlastingly *.

Ψυχην

* I am aware that the above passage has been generally quoted to shew, that the Pharisees maintained the Pythagorean doctrine of a transmigration of souls from one body to another. And I am willing to rest the matter upon this footing: because, though it will not then directly prove their belief that the soul would receive a different body at the resurrection, yet this seems to follow from it by an almost necessary consequence. For as it is not credible that the soul should be joined at the resurrection to each of these different bodies, so there can be no reason for giving this preference to one above another, or calling this one the soul's own body in opposition to all the rest, when they were all alike its property or habitation, though at different times. And, upon this state of the question, there is room for the same curious problem with which the Sadducees once attempted to puzzle our Saviour, *Matth.* xxii. 23. For supposing the same soul to have animated any number of different bodies, seven for instance, or more, by turns, whose shall she be at the resurrection? for she was united to each of them. Nor is the objection so easily answered in one case as the other: for here, by the very hypothesis, the same bodies must appear again; and, if they

Ψυχην δε πασαν μεν αφθαρτον, μεταβαινειν δε εις ετερον σωμα την των αγαθων μονην, την δε των φαυλων αιδιω τιμωρια κολαζεσθαι. De Bello Jud. Lib. 2. § 14. p. 1065. ed. Hudson.

Had the sentiment, which the apostle is confuting, sprang from the schools of the Philosophers; some of whom taught that there is a life to come, though not under the name of an anastasis or resurrection; there would have been more ground for the supposition, that they believed the soul's existence after death, and only denied a resurrection of the body. But it was too early for Philosophy thus to lift up her head, and dogmatize in the school of Christ. Her strength was not yet become so formidable, as to erect a bulwark within the walls of the church, and build her refinements upon the simplicity of the Gospel. This was reserved to later times; when more of the *wise* men according to the flesh, as well as of the rich and mighty, embraced the religion of a crucified Messiah; and gradually introduced a corrupt scheme of doctrine and discipline into the Christian world. It is true that the opinion, which the apostle is here supposed to be confuting, was espoused, about a century later, by the Marcionites and some other sects: of whom Justin Martyr says, "who also affirm "there is no resurrection of the dead, but that their souls are taken up into "heaven at the instant of death; do not imagine them to be Christians." Οι και λεγουσι μη ειναι νεκρων ανασασιν, αλλα αμα τω αποθνησκειν τας ψυχας αυτων αναλαμβανεσθαι εις τον ουρανον, μη υπολαβητε αυτους Χριστιανους. Dial. cum Tryphone, pars sec. p. 312. ed. Thirlby. In which passage, the opposition between the belief of a resurrection, and the immediate assumption of the soul into a state of heavenly glory, would incline one to think, that such as adopted the one, rejected the other. For the article of a resurrection of the flesh, or body, which afterwards obtained, and was inserted in the publick creeds, seems to have owed its birth to a *wretched* attempt to reconcile the doctrine of Christ with the speculations of Philosophy, and to blend them together; evidently adjudging to the latter the palm of this sublime discovery concerning a future existence, and only reserving to the former the unnecessary office, of raising a putrified, mouldered, body from the grave; and reuniting it to the soul, already enjoying the reward and honour of an endless life.

The Scripture never speaks to us in such language as this, that the bodies of men shall be raised, and united again to their souls in the day of Christ. It ranges them all under two classes, the living and the dead; of whom, Christ is equally represented as Lord and Judge. These we might again divide, according to their characters, into the righteous and the wicked; and consider what the Scripture asserts concerning both: but it will be sufficient to our present purpose, if we examine the Scripture doctrine concerning the former; such as are said to be in Christ, and the faithful servants of God, in every age. Of the pious dead then, and such as die in the Lord, it is affirmed, that they shall *come forth to the resurrection of life*, and *rise incorruptible*; that the living shall not be beforehand with them in glory and reward, for *such as sleep in Jesus shall rise first, and God shall bring them along with him.* Of the pious living,

they rise at all, be raised for an habitation to the soul. But I will not be too sanguine upon this head, because, absurd as it would seem to the apprehension of every man beside, it is possible that a Jew, a Pharisee, a Rabbi, might believe that we shall rise with them all. And perhaps some Christians, whose heads have been turned with reading such writings, may be capable of believing it after him,

who remain to the laſt day (whom, on account of the general expectation of Chriſt's coming, and the duty of all Chriſtians to *look for and haſte unto* that glorious event, the apoſtle ſometimes joins with himſelf, and ſpeaks of in theſe terms, *We that are alive*) it is ſaid, that *they ſhall be changed*; that *God ſhall quicken their mortal bodies, by his Spirit which dwelleth in them*; that *they ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God*; which is called *the redemption of the body*; that *they ſhall be cloathed with their houſes from heaven*; *put on immortality and incorruption*; and that *going out of the body, they go home to the Lord*. I am ſenſible that ſome of theſe paſſages, according to the common ſentiment of Chriſtians, receive a very different application; and are, for the moſt part, referred to the ſtate and expectation of the dead in Chriſt, eſpecially the ſecond and laſt. But as my apology for departing from the general opinion in theſe particulars, I will offer ſome remarks upon the turn of thought and expreſſion of the New Teſtament writers, and particularly of St. *Paul*, with relation to the hope of the goſpel.

Though they frequently and ſtrongly aſſert the doctrine of a reſurrection from the dead, yet their exhortations and encouragements to Chriſtians are more ſparingly drawn from that topick than we commonly apprehend. Nor are their arguments generally drawn from the brevity of human life, and the certainty of death. Neither do I remember that Chriſtians are ever conſidered as under an abſolute neceſſity of dying, or exhorted univerſally to expect and prepare for *death*. Theſe conſiderations, however weighty in themſelves, are ſwallowed up by another, ſtill more grand and intereſting; which ſhould continually poſſeſs the minds of Chriſtians—the appearance of their Lord and Saviour. This event is perpetually ſet forth, as the terror of the wicked, the hope and joy of the righteous; a prelude of deſtruction to ungodly men, but of honour and ſalvation to the virtuous; *when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints, and admired in all them that believe*. For this they are to be in readineſs; to look for it, that it may not come upon them unawares, nor find them immerſed in the vices and pleaſures of the world: and to this day they are exhorted to haſten forward, conſidering it as drawing near, and the time of its taking place very uncertain; which may ſurprize us at an hour when we leaſt expected it. And the apoſtle ſpeaks of it as an event, which Chriſtians in his own day ſhould be waiting for and expecting; and which might overtake the perſons to whom he was writing. Though it ſhould be conſtantly remembered, that neither he nor his great maſter, who firſt revealed this event to the world, pretended to determine the preciſe time of its accompliſhment; but only taught that it would certainly take place, and admoniſhed men to watch. From this general view of the ſentiment and language of Scripture, I think, we may reaſonably enough preſume, with reſpect to particular paſſages, relating to the hope, deſire, and expectation of good men, or written for their conſolation and encouragement (when the contrary is not implied, and where neither the expreſſion nor ſentiment refutes ſuch an interpretation) that they ſhould be underſtood, as referring to that deciſive day, when *the Lord ſhall deſcend from heaven*; when *their redemption is come*, and the time of the righteous judgment of God. Thus when the apoſtle, writing to the Romans, ſays, cap. viii. 10, 11. *If Chriſt be in you, the body is dead, becauſe of ſin; but the ſpirit is life, becauſe of righteouſneſs. But if the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead dwell in you, he that raiſed up Chriſt from*

the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. v. 12. *for if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live:* it is entirely ſuitable to the phraſe and deſign of the writer, and the connexion of his diſcourſe, to underſtand it as ſpoken of the operation of the divine power, upon the living bodies of the ſaints, at the day of Chriſt. For the word ζωοποιειν to *quicken*, very aptly expreſſes the communication of incorruptibility and immortality to the human frame, and becomes more proper, after he had given the epithet of dead, to the preſent bodies with which we are cloathed.

In another place, the apoſtle expreſſes his apprehenſion of the near approach of death, in this manner; *ſo then death worketh in us, but life in you*, 2 Cor. iv. 12. But he adds, ſpeaking, as he frequently does, of himſelf, in the plural number, *we know that he who raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, ſhall raiſe us alſo by Jeſus Chriſt, and preſent us with you:* ſo that his reward was as ſecure as if he had lived longer with them, and continued till the day of Chriſt. *For we know*, ſays he, cap. v. 1. *that if this earthly houſe of our tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* In the fourth verſe of this chapter, his diſcourſe is general; and he comes to conſider the deſires and feelings of all good Chriſtians. *For we that are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened: not for that we would be uncloathed, but cloathed upon, that mortality might be ſwallowed up of life.* To be uncloathed, is what he before called the diſſolution of this earthly tabernacle; to be cloathed upon, the receiving their houſe from heaven, or the glorified body of the ſaints. From whence we may infer, that the apoſtle did not deſire, nor is it the duty of any Chriſtian to deſire, *death.* The love of life is natural, and inſeparable from us. Even under pain and calamity, if it do not overpower and diſorder the mind, and remove the laſt conſolation of human miſery, the hope of happier days, we ſtill cheriſh and prize the gift of our Maker. Life is one of the moſt valuable poſſeſſions we can part with: and it is a mark of extreme folly, to be laviſh of that, which nothing but the neceſſity of nature ſhould extort from us; unleſs we reſign it at the command of heaven, to preſerve a good conſcience and hope toward God; or for the ſake of ſome valuable acceſſion of good to our community or mankind in general. But it is not any little mortification in our worldly affairs, or flight of ſpiritual affection, that will juſtify us in being weary of life, and longing to get out of it. But to proceed with the apoſtle, it is God, ſays he, who has wrought us to this pitch of hope, and the expectation of immortal glory; having given us his holy Spirit, as an earneſt of his affection and future favour. *Therefore we are always confident, and willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord.* It is not very conſiſtent, after he has been ſaying that Chriſtians do not deſire to be uncloathed, or put off the body in death, to ſuppoſe them now altogether confident, and willing to do this. For this reaſon the phraſe, *being abſent from the body*, cannot here ſignify the ſeparation between ſoul and body which takes place at death: but *the body* muſt denote the ſtate of men and things at preſent, as oppoſed to that new ſtate which will take place at the day of judgment and of the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt from heaven; at which time, and not before, Chriſtians may be ſaid to quit the body, ſo as to be preſent with the Lord. Thus we find the word *body* applied, Heb. xiii. 3. *Remember them which are in adverſity, as being yourſelves in the body,*

that is, in a ſtate of imperfection and weakneſs, in which we are ſubject to many diſtreſſes. For it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, that the writer's argument to excite their compaſſion is drawn from the ſoul's being inveloped in a material vehicle, which it will be hereafter as well as now, and in a ſtate where there will be no room for this kind of ſympathy, becauſe there will be no mourners. Therefore the *being in the body* and *out of the body* has no relation to the ſoul's putting on or off its external cloathing, its becoming a pure ſpirit or being allied to a groſſer ſyſtem, but only to the whole preſent and future condition of mankind; the being *at home in the body* denoting the life we live here, and the *being abſent from it*, the glorious life of ſaints after the reſurrection. The idea which we have of the ſoul being united here to a material ſyſtem, and becoming diſengaged from it at death, and thus going out of the body, has not been derived from Scripture, but from the refinements of philoſophy.

Further, *the redemption of the body*, Rom. viii. 23. does not ſignify the reſurrection of theſe frail bodies, but the deliverance which good men will have at the coming of Chriſt from a ſtate of mortality and weakneſs. And though in this ſenſe it might be ſaid that the body itſelf is redeemed, when it is changed and made incapable of dying, yet it ſeems more proper here to conſider the *body* as the preſent ſtate of things, and render the paſſage *waiting for the adoption, to wit, a redemption from the body.* It is not uncommon with ancient writers to ſay, that a thing was *bought* or *redeemed*, when men were redeemed or delivered from it. Εαν εχεις δια των χειρων σου δος ινα εργαση εις λυτρωσιν αμαρτιων σου, *If you are able, give, that you may thus contribute to the ranſom of your ſins*, or to your deliverance from them. *Ap. Conſtit.* L. 7. c. 12. This paſſage is an alluſion to *Dan.* iv. 27. where the prophet exhorts king Nebuchadnezzar to break off, or, as the Seventy render it, to *ranſom* (λυτρωσαι) his ſins, his oppreſſion and extortion, which are the frequent ſins of monarchs, by ſhewing mercy. Αιτουμενοι λυτρωσιν των κατεχοντων ανιαρων, *begging to be delivered from their oppreſſing calamities.* Greg. Nazian. adv. Julianum, p. 6. l. 4. ed. Eton. The verb alſo is uſed in the ſame manner as the ſubſtantive. Δια μιας ωρας αιωνιον κολασιν εξαγοραζομενοι, *redeeming*, or delivering themſelves from, *everlaſting puniſhment by the ſufferings of one hour.* De martyrio Polycarpi, ap. Pat. Ap. V. 2. p. 196. l. 7. Ed. Clerici. Χρημασι την φιλοτιμιαν εξωνησασθαι παρα του Επικυδους, *to purchaſe*, or buy off, *his competition with a ſum of money.* Plut. Themiſtocles. V. 1. p. 252. l. 17. Αιτιαν εχων εξωνησασθαι τινα των συκοφαντων, *being ſuſpected of buying off ſome of his accuſers.* Id. V. 3. p. 297. l. penult. Ως απογνωσει της φανερας αμυνας, ωνουμενος τον ανδρα δια της προδοσιας, *as having, through deſpair of an honourable victory, attempted to get rid of the man by treachery.* Id. in Sertorio, V. 3. p. 329. l. 9. Thus Cicero, *nulla eſt acerbitas —quam quidem ego a republica meis privatis et domeſticis incommodis—libentiſſime redemiſſem.* Ep. ad Fam. Lib. 2. ep. 16. *Ut Latro Tacfarinas pace et conceſſione agrorum redimeretur.* Tacitus, ann. 3. § 73. See alſo L. 1. § 17. Thus, *Heb.* ix. 14. death is ſaid to intervene for the *redemption of*, or rather from, *tranſgreſſions.* To the ſame claſs we muſt refer *Eph.* v. 16. *redeeming the time*, that is, delivering themſelves from it. For that this is not an exhortation to exerciſe a moral virtue, as diligence and induſtry, or filling up every portion of their time with ſome uſeful employment, but only to uſe prudence and caution in their behaviour, will appear, 1. from the former verſe, *ſee then*

that

that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools but as wiſe, 2. from the word καιρος, which does not ſignify *time* in general, but any particular ſeaſon, whether of proſperity or adverſity, 3. from the reaſon aſſigned for this conduct, *becauſe the days are evil*, which intimates ſome diſtreſs or danger which threatened them, and 4. from the uſe of the phraſe elſewhere, by which it appears a proverbial expreſſion, and applied to any arts, honeſt or diſhoneſt, by which preſent danger may be avoided. Ο μεν και κατ' αληθειαν ευσεβων, ο δε τον καιρον εξονυμενος, και κρυπλων εν επιεικειας πλασματι το κακοηθες, *the one a man of real piety, the other redeeming the time*, or a meer time-ſerver, *who concealed the wickedneſs of his heart beneath the garb of external virtue.* Greg. Naz. adv. Julianum, p. 14. l. 13. Thus when Sertorius had paid conſiderable ſums to the barbarians, to eſcape their inſults, and obtain a free paſſage over the mountains, his friends being filled with indignation that a Proconſul ſhould become tributary to ſuch wretches as thoſe, he made no other anſwer than that he purchaſed from them the time or ſeaſon of action, καιρον ωνεισθαι φησας. Plutarch in Sertorio, V. 3, p. 310. l. 13. It is probable therefore that the apoſtle, ſeeing his converts ſurrounded with enemies and calumniators, or, according to the Poet,

Fallen upon evil days and evil tongues,

exhorts them to uſe all poſſible caution for their own ſafety, giving no offence, nor occaſion to others to hurt or ſpeak evil of them; and thus by their wiſdom and circumſpection, or guarding againſt danger, deliver themſelves from the injuſtice and malice of a wicked age.

I am deceived if the famous text in the Philippians, chap. i. 23. which is ſo often quoted to prove a ſeparate ſtate of ſouls, and their being admitted to the preſence of Chriſt before the reſurrection, be not capable of a juſter interpretation, more agreeable to the tenour of the New Teſtament, to the deſign of the writer in that place, as well as to every particular expreſſion upon the principle which I have advanced above, than that which is given to it by the generality of commentators. It is not eaſy to diſcern, upon the common interpretation, why the apoſtle ſhould be in a ſtrait betwixt two, the departing hence and ſtaying in the body, or how he ſhould be at a loſs what choice to make for himſelf, while he is ſuppoſed to affirm abſolutely concerning the former, that it is far better. But it will be proper here to examine the whole paſſage in its connexion. The Apoſtle was at this time in Rome, a priſoner in bonds, for the teſtimony of Chriſt and the hope of the goſpel, and, as we find, altogether uncertain what might be the iſſue, life or death. Nevertheleſs, calm and unmoved by the ſufferings which awaited him, he rejoices in the earneſt expectation and hope, that, whatever might befall himſelf in particular, Chriſt would be magnified, his religion advanced, and honour redound to the cauſe in which he had ſo zealouſly embarked, either by his life or his death. *For, to me, to live is Chriſt.* The advancement of his cauſe is the end of all my labours and wiſhes. I ſeek no intereſt or favour but his. *And to die is gain*, in bearing a teſtimony with my lateſt breath to the truth of his religion; and having an aſſured hope, by being made conformable to his ſufferings, that I ſhall likewiſe be conformed to his image in glory. The twenty-ſecond verſe, which we tranſlate in a manner hardly intelligible, and unconnected with what precedes or follows, I propoſe to point in this manner; ει δε το ζην εν σαρκι τουτο, μοι καρπος

καρπος εργυ *, και τι αιρησομαι, ου γνωριζω; and to render it "but whether "this life in the fleſh be advantageous or deſirable to myſelf; and which I "ſhould make choice of, if it were ſubmitted to my diſpoſal, I am unable to "determine." The twenty-third verſe may, if I judge right, be rationally explained in this manner: "for I am diſtreſſed and ſtraitened by theſe two "things, life and death, and toſſed between them both, much againſt my "wiſh and inclination: having a fixed choice and ſupreme deſire, if it were the "will of God, to quit the world and all its miſeries at once, and be with Chriſt "for ever; which bleſſedneſs we look for at his coming. This is an alterna-"tive which admits of no ſtrait or uncertainty, becauſe it is infinitely better "than every thing elſe. Yet I ſee that to continue ſome time longer in the "fleſh is more needful becauſe of you, who are not yet ſufficiently advanced in "virtue and piety. And in this perſuaſion I know that I ſhall not be removed "by death, or any other way, at preſent; but ſhall remain, and remain toge-"ther with you all, for your furtherance in every Chriſtian virtue, and con-"ſequent joy of faith, that your glorying in Jeſus Chriſt by me may be more "abundant, by my coming to you once more." By the deſire which the apoſtle had to be with Chriſt, I underſtand what he elſewhere calls, *the looking for the bleſſed hope of the appearance of Chriſt, waiting for the adoption, and the earneſt expectation of the manifeſtation of the ſons of God:* a hope which is common to all Chriſtians, and not more appropriate to one age of Chriſtianity than to another. It is to be taken notice of alſo, that the Apoſtle's choice was not divided between two things; one of which was beſt, and the other more agree-able to himſelf; or between his own inclination and profit, and ſomething which was more neceſſary and uſeful to others: but only which of two things was really moſt advantageous to himſelf, and therefore to be deſired, life or death, in his preſent ſituation. For as to the advantage which might redound to the cauſe of Chriſt, either by his living or dying, he was under no difficulty; but hoped that Chriſt would be magnified and honoured by both. And he informs us afterwards, what thing it was which he did inconteſtably prefer to all others, notwithſtand-ing his heſitation between the other two. Therefore it is not likely, that a circumſtance which he profeſſes to deſire above all, and ſignifies to be in his opinion far better, ſhould be one of the alternatives which perplexed his choice: nor otherwiſe, if he had an expectation of entring into the preſence and joy of his Lord, immediately after his diſſolution, that he ſhould ballance a moment be-tween life and death; or heſitate about giving a preference to the latter.

For a further confirmation of this ſenſe of the paſſage, I obſerve, that it is agreed by the moſt learned divines, even thoſe who ſupport the opinion of an intermediate conſcious ſtate between death and the reſurrection, that the Scrip-

* Καρπος εργυ ſeems a Latiniſm, and anſwers to *operæ pretium*. Several ſuch have been ob-ſerved in the New Teſtament. So, *Luke* xii. 58. δος εργασιαν, that is literally, *da operam, do thy endeavour*; for which the Greeks ſaid εργον ποιειν. When there is much commerce between two nations, the idioms of one language ſlide inſenſibly into the other. And as ſeveral Latin authors have adopted Greek modes of expreſſion, it is natural to think that Latin idioms alſo ſhould be ſometimes made uſe of by Greek writers who were acquainted with both the languages. We find this tranſlation of idioms from one language to another, to have been remarkably uſed by the writers of the New Teſtament, who lean very much to the Hebrew in a number of expreſſions, and deal without ſcruple in the phraſes and conſtructions of a language which was continually read in their ſynagogues.

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ture ſpeaks of a place appropriated to the dead, which they ſometimes call Hades, ſometimes the inviſible ſtate; and whither the ſouls of men deſcend, after their ſeparation from the body, and continue till the reſurrection. Thither alſo they maintain that our Lord deſcended at the time of his death; and abode, till he returned to life. But he did not deſcend into Hades after his reſurrection, but aſcended up into heaven: he is no more in the ſtate of the dead, but ſitteth at the right hand of God. Therefore, though we ſhould grant that the ſouls of men preſerve their conſciouſneſs in a ſeparate ſtate, and that the good enjoy great happineſs, it will by no means follow from thence that they are with Chriſt. Nay the contrary is certain, unleſs we ſuppoſe againſt the whole current of Scripture, that Chriſt is not riſen, or is returned to the dead again. To ſee in what manner the Scriptures ſpeak of the dead, as oppoſed to the living or the raiſed, we need only refer to the remarks of St. Peter on the words ſpoken by David, *Pſalm* xvi. 10. *becauſe thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell* (or Hades, the place of the departed) *nor ſuffer thine holy one to ſee corruption. For David*, he ſays, *is not aſcended into heaven.* Which, he takes for granted, was ſufficiently proved to thoſe who knew that *he was dead and buried, and that his ſepulchre was with them to that day*, v. 29. If therefore theſe two things be inconſiſtent, to aſcend into heaven, the place where Chriſt is; and to be at the ſame time in the ſtate of the dead; it is clear, that the apoſtle could not have any expectation of being with Chriſt before the reſurrection and the coming of his Lord. This time, and no other, is referred to in Chriſt's promiſe to his diſciples, *I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myſelf, that where I am there ye may be alſo*, John xiv. 2, 3. How does this conſiſt with their being preſent with him before his appearance? Does he come to receive them to himſelf, after they have been with him for many generations?

The phraſe συνεχομαι εκ is very unuſual. This verb is generally joined to a dative without a prepoſition, and ſometimes with a genitive by the prepoſition υπο; but I do not remember an inſtance, in any claſſical author, where it is joined with εκ. We have this conſtruction, *Exod.* xxvi. 3. συνεχονται εξ αλληλων, *the curtains ſhall be coupled together one to another*, where other copies read αλληλαις or ετερα τη ετερα, according to the more uſual government. It is probable therefore that συνεχομαι εκ των δυο is the ſame as συνεχομαι τοις δυο or υπο των δυο. But I do not recollect that this phraſe ever implies doubt or heſitation between two things, which of them is to be preferred; but, on the contrary, that both of them are diſagreeable and burdenſome. Συνεχομαι τυτοις δυσι, νοσω και πενια would not, I apprehend, ſignify that a man was at a loſs whether to chuſe, ſickneſs or poverty; but that he was grievouſly afflicted by thoſe two evils, either preſent or in proſpect. Our tranſlators ſeem to have had no other reaſon for rendering them as they did, but becauſe the Apoſtle had ſaid juſt before, that he did not know which to chuſe. But his meaning moſt probably is, that both his impriſonment at Rome, that life which he then lived, and the violent death which threatened him, were both evils, being neither of them eligible to him in themſelves; though he was willing to ſubmit to either for the glory of God and the good of mankind. And while thus afflicted and diſtreſſed, his ſupreme deſire was to be delivered from all the calamities of the world at once, by the coming of Chriſt. Though at the ſame time he thought

that

ſhat to continue here longer was more neceſſary for them to whom he was writing and for the reſt of Chriſtians, as the ſchemes of Providence in this ſtate were not yet completed. In this perſuaſion he encourages them to hope that he ſhould live and continue longer together with them in the world. And συμπαραμενω πασιν υμιν may imply, not merely that the Apoſtle's life ſhould be ſpared, or that he ſhould viſit them again, but that he and they and all Chriſtians ſhould live ſome time longer in this ſtate of trial. Or elſe he ſpeaks only in reference to his firſt difficulty, and comes to a reſolution between life and death, which to chuſe: and he is determined to the former by the conſideration of the ſervice which he might do to the church. But his departure out of the world, by which he was to go to Chriſt, is out of the queſtion; nor does he determine againſt that which he knew to be ſo much better. The latter part of the twenty-third verſe may be underſtood as in a parentheſis, and the whole then to this effect: "But whether this preſent afflicted life be de-
"ſirable to me, and what I ſhall chuſe, I know not. For I ſee nothing but
"two evils before me, a calamitous life and an untimely death, while my deſire
"and choice is to depart out of the world, and thus to eſcape from them both
"and be with Chriſt, which is ſo much beyond every thing elſe. Neverthe-
"leſs, as far as I can ſee, between two things ſo little eligible to myſelf, ſuch
"a life and ſuch a death, to continue in the fleſh may be more neceſſary for
"you. And in this perſuaſion I expect to live, and help forward your ſpiritual
"edification and joy by coming to you again."

As this method of interpretation, which I have adopted, may appear ſtrange to thoſe who have always been uſed to conſider the ſubject in another light; and as the paſſages which I have been conſidering are thoſe by which the merits of the cauſe have been for the moſt part tried and determined; I will beg the reader's patience while I enter a little further into this matter. I would have it then be enquired, whether the uſual manner of thinking upon theſe ſubjects, has not totally prevented us from attending to the true ſenſe of Scripture, and diſcerning the ſtate of the caſe ſuch as it would appear to the Apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians.——I mean, whether the conſidering death as an event which muſt neceſſarily precede our being called into judgment, and receiving the reward of our conduct; or as making the leaſt difference with reſpect to the time of retribution, of our going hence and being with Chriſt; and likewiſe the repreſenting in our thoughts the time of his appearance as at an immenſe, inſtead of an unknown diſtance, and conceiving of it as an event hardly to be expected in our own days, and which could much leſs reaſonably be expected in any former age (which I believe will be found to be the moſt general ſentiment of Chriſtians) whether theſe conceptions, I ſay, have not inſenſibly led us to affix, to ſeveral paſſages of Scripture, a meaning entirely unknown to the ſacred writers. I will venture to affirm, that the texts, which have been ſo often quoted by the advocates for an intermediate ſtate, do not aſſert any ſuch thing, and do not deſerve to be urged as proofs in confirmation of this point, becauſe of their very great ambiguity. For ſince the going out of the body, the departing hence and being with Chriſt, are equivocal expreſſions, and full as applicable to the general departure of Chriſtians out of this ſtate into another at the coming of Chriſt, as to any particular removal which can be ſuppoſed to take place at death, they are ſo far from giving a ſufficient handle for thoſe

inferences which are commonly drawn from them, that they are only capable of being accommodated to ſuch a ſenſe, after it has been ſhewn by other proofs to be the undoubted ſenſe of Scripture. But, in the mean time, the true and preciſe ſenſe of ſuch paſſages muſt be ſought for from other parts of the New Teſtament, where the promiſes of the goſpel are delivered more explicitly, and the expectations of Chriſtians declared without any ambiguity. From reading theſe ſacred books then we find, that the Meſſiah left the world and aſcended up to heaven, at the very time when he was expected by his followers to erect a mighty kingdom, and reign victorious over the whole globe: that, as they afterwards underſtood, he was appointed of God to judge the whole world, both the living and the dead, and to confer, not the periſhing honours of this life upon favourites ſelected out of a ſingle people, but, immortality of life and happineſs upon ſuch men out of every nation and party, as were pleaſing to the Father of all, who, without reſpect of perſons, judgeth every man according to his works: that the ſame Jeſus, before his aſcenſion, confirmed the minds of his diſciples with the promiſe of his certain return to them, telling them, not that the gates of heaven ſhould be opened to them at their death, or that they ſhould then be admitted to ſee and partake of his glory in the manſions he was going to prepare for them; but, that he himſelf would return, after an indefinite time, to raiſe the dead and receive all his faithful ſervants to himſelf, that where he was there they might be alſo; and in that day they ſhould know, by ſenſible demonſtration, the truth of all they had heard from him, and find that they were very dear and cloſely united to him, as he was to his God and Father: that theſe men afterwards went about the world, proclaiming Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, the Judge and Saviour of mankind, who ſhould appear again to judge the whole world in righteouſneſs; and exhorting men to repent and forſake their ſins, that they might have confidence, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming. What now muſt we imagine to have been the ſentiments of men thus inſtructed and inſtructing others, who knew and ſpoke of no glory but that which is to be revealed at the coming of Chriſt, and expected ſalvation from no other name or power but his? What departure can they be ſuppoſed to deſire and long for, or what going out of the body could they have in view, when mentioned in conjunction with the going to or being preſent with Chriſt, but that which was to take place at his coming? Had they any other or better hope, than that which they derived from the goſpel, or any ſources of intelligence beſides the promiſes of Chriſt? And is any thing more likely, than that they ſhould have theſe promiſes continually in view, and ſpeak and write agreeable to ſuch information? Can it then be right, when we interpret the Scriptures, to build a new doctrine upon two or three dubious paſſages, and not rather explain them by the conſtant tenour and ſcope of other parts of theſe writings, eſpecially when ſuch explanations are clear and eaſy, and imply nothing inconſiſtent with the deſign and connection of the whole? And is it a ſmall advantage, by this method, to remove difficulties which have perplexed the minds of many, to reconcile the Scriptures with themſelves, and make them ſpeak one, conſiſtent, uniform language?

I acknowledge that the above remarks do not affect another paſſage, which is commonly urged in proof of a ſtate of intermediate happineſs. I ſpeak

of our Saviour's words to the thief upon the croſs, *To day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe*, Luke xxiii. 43. But there are two things to be conſidered; whether it is likely, either, 1. that this malefactor ſhould intend all that is generally ſuppoſed, in the requeſt which he made to Jeſus; or, 2. that Chriſt ſhould then make him a promiſe of future happineſs. We know nothing of his former life and character, but from what we read that he was a robber, never meeting with him but in this ſingle ſcene. Nothing therefore is eaſier than to give a looſe to conjecture, and make him to have been juſt what we pleaſe. If he had ever been a diſciple of Jeſus, as ſome have ſuppoſed, he had frequently been a hearer of his doctrine; and muſt have had better opportunity of acquainting himſelf with his maſter's character, than otherwiſe appears. But if he was ſo fully informed of the nature of Chriſt's kingdom, as to know that it had nothing to do with this world; that the Meſſiah was to die, and riſe again; that he ſhould afterward aſcend into heaven, and be exalted to the right hand of God, to become a Prince and a Saviour; and that by his power remiſſion of ſins and ſalvation ſhould be conferred upon mankind; being made Lord of the dead and of the living, and Judge of the whole world: if we ſuppoſe him to have been acquainted with all this, he had learnt more in the ſhort ſpace that he was with Jeſus, and acquired juſter notions of the ſcheme of Chriſtianity, than all the apoſtles and other diſciples of Chriſt, during his whole miniſtry, or even after his reſurrection, till they had been enlightened from above, and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. He appears to have had more modeſty, and a juſter ſenſe of his unhappy condition, than the other malefactor, together with a general knowledge of the character and pretenſions of Jeſus, either from report, or in ſome other way. He therefore rebuked the petulance and inſenſibility of his fellow criminal, who ſuffered with him in an evil cauſe, and for his own ſins; but Jeſus altogether innocently, and through the malice and envy of others, having *done nothing amiſs*. And as it is not probable, that he ſhould have more improved notions of Chriſt, and his future kingdom, than were common to the nation, and to Chriſt's own diſciples; he ſeems to have made the ſame requeſt humbly and ſeriouſly, which the other did with inſult and mockery. For, if he thought that Jeſus was really the Meſſiah, he might eaſily believe, that God would interpoſe, in ſome extraordinary manner, to ſave him from death, and inveſt him with that power, by which he would be able to deliver others. At leaſt, this way of reaſoning is more conformable to the opinions and prejudices of the ancient Jews, than any other we may contrive for them, at this diſtance. To the requeſt which he made our Lord anſwers, that, whatever expectations he might form from his future power and reign, they ſhould both of them, this very day, be in Paradiſe, the abode of the departed, and be joined to the dead of former ages. For Paradiſe, as has been often remarked by different writers, was, according to the opinion of the Jews, one part of the habitation of the dead, aſſigned to righteous and good men. Our Lord therefore either ſuppoſes him to be a penitent and reformed man; or elſe gives this appellation to the whole ſtate and place, where the dead are ſuppoſed to dwell, becauſe he was going to deſcend thither himſelf. But there is no proof, though he borrowed the name from them, that he adopted all the traditions of the Jews concerning Paradiſe. And moreover, I frankly confeſs, that I do not readily

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diſcern the great importance or propriety, of promiſing future ſalvation to any individual in the world; eſpecially to one of ſuch ſuſpicious character, and whoſe reformation, if real, is no where marked, and was far from being publickly known. If he had been a reformed man, ſome time before he came to this untimely end (as many writers ſuppoſe, though without ſufficient evidence) the promiſe was far from being neceſſary, by way of example or encouragement to penitent ſinners, becauſe the goſpel itſelf was a publication of pardon, to all ſuch as repented and reformed. If he was not a penitent till this inſtant; it could have no good influence upon the reformation of men's manners, to promiſe a robber on the croſs, in this publick manner, a free and full pardon of all his offences; and this, upon his giving no other ſigns of repentance, than his deſiring to be remembered by Chriſt hereafter: which deſire at death, is not at all inconſiſtent with a very abandoned character and conduct through life. But though we ſhould grant, upon this ſlender evidence, that he was both a penitent and reformed man, it will not be immediately certain that he was to be in a ſtate of conſciouſneſs and enjoyment. It muſt be firſt proved of the dead in general, before it can be aſſerted with good foundation of any particular perſons, that they have their feeling and conſciouſneſs remaining. And till this be made out by other arguments, it will be reaſonable to believe, that the contents of Chriſt's promiſe were, at the moſt, only that he ſhould be joined to the righteous dead, or, according to the Scripture phraſe, that he ſhould *ſleep in Jeſus*.

The opinion of thoſe, who maintain that the reſurrection of the dead, and the coming of Chriſt to judgment, are continual and ſucceſſive, taking place to every individual perſon at the inſtant of his own departure, may be thought to merit ſome conſideration in this place. It would be too long however to enter into a particular diſcuſſion, of every paſſage in Scripture, relative to this ſubject; and ſee how far they conſiſt with ſuch an hypotheſis. But it is obvious to remark, that, upon this ſuppoſition, the Scriptures do not ſpeak in the moſt ſimple, intelligible, manner; and that the writers of them have not been the moſt happy in conveying to us their meaning, upon one of the moſt common and important topics which they had to enlarge on; and where we can diſcover no reaſon for their deviating from the moſt eaſy and natural method of expreſſing themſelves, or ſtudying an affected obſcurity. For it could never have occurred to any man's thoughts, from ſuch aſſertions as this, *that God had appointed a day, in the which he would judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he had ordained*, that there were particular trials of the dead, carrying on at all times, from one end of the world to the other. This notion, which Chriſtians have adopted, is more conformable to the poetic deſcriptions of the tribunals in Tartarus; where the judges ſit continually to take cognizance of every new ghoſt that arrives; than to the repreſentations and language of the New Teſtament. The ſentiment of an immediate reſurrection and reſtoration to life, though it removes ſome few difficulties, which have obſcured the Scripture-doctrine concerning a future ſtate; yet involves us in ſo many others, reſpecting the clearneſs and preciſion of the New Teſtament writers, and is built beſides upon ſuch ſlender proof, as to ſeem hardly defenſible. Indeed I cannot help thinking, that this method of interpretation would never have been embraced by learned men, but upon the apparent *neceſſity* there was, both of reconciling the different paſſages of Scripture together in this

manner, and the Scriptures themſelves to the ſuppoſed diſcoveries of Philoſophy, concerning the continued uninterrupted conſciouſneſs of the human mind.

But to purſue my former argument; I think there needs little to prove, that, if the reſurrection of the *body be* a doctrine of Scripture, it is at leaſt very ambiguouſly revealed, and expreſſed in ſuch a manner, as to leave room for drawing very different concluſions from the paſſages which are ſuppoſed to aſſert it. And I further recommend to thoſe, who conſider the reſurrection taught in the New Teſtament, as a mere appendage to the happineſs and reward of good men in another ſtate (which is indeed completed by this, but begins many ages before) wherever a reſurrection is mentioned, to add to it theſe words, "of the body;" and conſider the perſons ſaid to be then raiſed, as enjoying beforehand the bliſsful preſence of their Saviour, and the crown of life which we hope and wait for here: and they will ſee, how much this idea deſtroys the force and beauty of ſo many ſublime paſſages, written for the comfort and encouragement of the Chriſtian world. Indeed, if the reſcuing an animal body, from corruption and the grave, be all that is meant in the promiſes of Scripture, concerning a reſurrection to life; and it be at the ſame time, as they ſay, clearly taught, that the ſouls of good men enter upon happineſs, long before this period, and at the inſtant of death;—one would not be unthankful for any information, relative to the circumſtances of a future life.—Yet it ſeems to be the leaſt intereſting part of the Chriſtian doctrine; the leaſt important, as a ſanction to its laws; and the leaſt neceſſary to the comfort and hope of ſuch as embrace it. If it be a doctrine of the Scripture, I do not complain, that our curioſity has been indulged, in a point of this nature; and that, for the ſatisfaction of human wit, ſomething more has been revealed to us, than we could have diſcovered by our own ſagacity. But, till there is more evidence of this, I muſt conſider the hope of a reſurrection as being, according to the known and uſual method of divine revelation, a very needful and important branch of our inſtruction and belief; and given for nobler purpoſes, than barely to amuſe the human mind with a greater inſight into the divine proceedings, and the *manner* in which God will reward the righteous, than appears at preſent, upon ſuch repreſentation of things, to have been neceſſary either to our ſatisfaction or improvement.

I know it is generally ſaid, that, when the body is raiſed and united again to the ſoul, the happineſs of the ſaints is quite complete; and that, for this reaſon, Chriſtians are ſo often referred to this event, for their encouragement and hope; and the time of imperfect beatitude, between death and the reſurrection, is ſo ſeldom mentioned. I will not be ſo unreaſonable as to inſiſt upon any proof, that the reunion of a ſoul to its former body, is ſo neceſſary to its perfection and joy, that, all other things continuing in the ſame ſtate, this alone ſhould be ſuch a vaſt acceſſion of bliſs, as quite to obſcure the ſplendor of its former happineſs, and entitle the latter only to the name of a reward, and to be the continual ſubject of the goſpel promiſes. I will only remark theſe two things; firſt, that it is a ſuppoſition, which is evidently made for the purpoſe, "that the heavenly happineſs is neither completed at once, nor gradually increaſes; but is given at firſt in ſome low degrees, and afterward "arrives,

" arrives, in an inſtant, at its height and perfection, when the body is raiſed;" and, ſecondly, that it muſt always be a conſiderable difficulty, with thinking minds, to conceive, why the honour and reward of a future ſtate, ſhould be repreſented as depending more upon the revival of a body long ſince mouldered away, than upon the preſence of God and of Chriſt, the ſociety of angels and bleſſed ſpirits, and the exerciſe and improvement of all divine and ſocial virtues; all which enjoyments, upon theſe principles, are prior to a reſurrection of the fleſh, and, for any thing we know, capable of riſing in infinite progreſſion without it. And I think that the advocates for an immediate tranſlation of the ſoul into heaven, are left under a diſagreeable dilemma; either of being conſtrained to draw very faint pictures of the enjoyment of the ſtate preceding a reſurrection, and much below the uſual ſtrain of declamation upon theſe ſubjects, or to part with the only plauſible argument, they have to ſhew, why the New Teſtament, upon a ſuppoſition that their ſcheme is true, has fixed the reward and happineſs of good men to the reſurrection, and ſo uniformly exhorts them to look forward to this diſtant period.

And let them ſhew, if they can, ſome good reaſon, why St. Paul, when comforting the Theſſalonians concerning their departed friends, has miſſed ſo fair an occaſion of telling them, that the dead in Chriſt were now in glory, enjoying the bliſsful preſence of their maſter; that they were rather to be envied, than lamented, becauſe they were gone before us to the poſſeſſion of ſo much happineſs; and enjoyed the pleaſing expectation of being joined to us again for ever. Let us examine what he has ſaid, and ſee how well it agrees with the common topicks of conſolation, upon ſuch mournful occaſions. *I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are aſleep*; or be unacquainted with what relates to them, and the happineſs that is laid up for them; *that ye may not ſorrow as others, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jeſus died, and roſe again, ſo alſo we believe, that them who ſleep in Jeſus, God will bring together with him. For this we ſay unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, ſhall not be beforehand with them that are aſleep*; becauſe, when the Lord ſhall deſcend from heaven, the dead in Chriſt ſhall be raiſed in the firſt place: then they who remain ſhall be caught up, to meet the Lord in the air. I had almoſt ſaid, how flat and inſipid: but I correct myſelf: how far ſhort of the force and energy of modern conſolations! Is the Apoſtle ſo miſerable a comforter, ſo little verſed in the arts of ſoothing, as quite to overlook the *threadbare* topick of later declaimers? or was his magazine of conſolations juſt exhauſted? had he nothing better, near at hand; no argument, in his whole ſyſtem of divinity, more efficacious to ſuppreſs a ſigh, and wipe away the falling tear? has he not a word to ſay, of the *preſent* happineſs upon which true believers are entered? and can he only tell us, that we who are alive, and remain to the day of Chriſt, ſhall not be beforehand with them who ſleep? that is, that death ſhould be no loſs to them, and that they ſhould not be put back by it, in the time of entring upon their glory and reward. I cannot think this natural, becauſe I believe there is not a preacher or writer in the world, provided he admitted this article into his creed, who would have been ſo prodigiouſly reſerved upon a like occaſion, and ſo very much upon his guard againſt uſing any words of comfort, which ſuch an idea could not fail of ſuggeſting in great plenty.

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With reſpect to the fear of death, and the gloomy apprehenſions we may be ready to entertain upon this ſubject, when the expectation of an immediate entrance into Heaven is taken away; I obſerve, that the hope of a future life and of an immortality of being, ſtands on as ſure a foundation in this, as any other, hypotheſis: ſince, upon every ſcheme, it muſt altogether depend upon the power and benevolence of the great Being, who firſt produced us. For, to borrow the words of an ancient writer, "while we reaſon in this manner "concerning ſouls and ſpirits, and univerſally of things created, we ſhall be "liable to the leaſt error and confuſion: ſince all things, which are made, "have a beginning of their creation, and continue in being ſo long as God "wills them to be and to continue." *Sic et de animabus et de ſpiritibus, et omnino de omnibus his quæ facta ſunt cogitans quis, minime peccabit; quando omnia quæ facta ſunt, initium quidem factiuræ ſuæ habeant, perſeverant autem quoadusque ea Deus et eſſe et perſeverare voluerit.* Irenæus, II. 34. p. 169. cited by Thirlby in his notes on Juſtin Martyr, p. 149. If death, in ſuch a view of the conſtitution of things, ceaſe to be deſirable to good men, except as an alternative to a life of grievous pain and calamity; yet it is far from being a ſubject of terror, or deſtitute of that reviving hope, which is abundantly ſufficient to remove all anxiety and doubt, and make us chearfully reſign to the will of God, while we believe, that *he will not leave our lives in the grave, nor ſuffer his holy ones to dwell continually with corruption.* Though the gloomy vale be not turned into a garden of flowers for us, an effect more like enchantment than nature; yet we have the ſame chearful proſpect of life, light, and happineſs, when we get through it. And if the remarks, which have been made above, be juſt, death is not repreſented, in Scripture, as a matter of favour to good men, which they may long for and embrace with joy (which it would indeed be, if it were an immediate opening to heaven, and the pangs of a few hours led us directly to the gates of eternal bliſs) but a conſtitution, which God has been pleaſed to appoint mankind, becauſe of ſin and their imperfect natures, and from which good men are at length delivered, by the mercy of God, and the miniſtry of Jeſus Chriſt. *For the creature*, or creation, by which we may underſtand the world created anew unto good works by Chriſt Jeſus, all good men and true diſciples of Chriſt, *are made ſubject to vanity* and death, *not willingly*, of their free choice and deſire, but through the good pleaſure of their heavenly Father, who ſubjected them in hope of a deliverance. And we are taught to look forward to this time, and to expect that *when Chriſt, who is our life, ſhall appear, we alſo ſhall appear with him in glory.*

And though it ſhould be appointed to us to die, and we ſhould be removed before the deſired event takes place, nevertheleſs, our eyes ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God, we ſhall enjoy the glorious viſion equally with them that remain: for the firſt act of the Saviour ſhall be the raiſing his faithful ſervants to life, that they who ſleep in Jeſus may come along with him. Further, the time, which paſſes between death and the reſurrection, may be very ſhort. And though it ſhould be ſome ages longer than we apprehend, yet to them that ſleep, and are unconſcious of what paſſes, it will appear leſs than a moment; and the very ſame inſtant, which ſeparates them from this mortal life, muſt, to their thought and apprehenſion, be that which unites them

them for ever to their Saviour, and their God. I do not mention it with any conſiderable ſtreſs, that there ſeems a ſort of equality, which is not unpleaſing to the human mind, in ſuch a conſtitution as we are ſpeaking of; where no perſon is diſtinguiſhed from another, either to his advantage or loſs, on account of a difference in the time of his birth, which is wholly arbitrary, and conſtitutes no part of his character or deſert: but each man appearing in his own order, and receiving at the hand of providence, the materials of his future character and hope, having filled up the ſtation aſſigned him either to his honour or diſgrace, retires at the appointed time, and waits till a general day of retribution; to receive, in common with all, who have borne any part in the concerns of human life, that ſentence, which his conduct has deſerved, from the univerſal Judge and Parent. And one perſon has no more reaſon to complain, that an examination has not been made into his character and conduct before this time, than another, that he was not brought into the ſcene ſooner.

We need make no ſcruple further to confeſs, that it is not a conſtitution, which, if it depended upon our own judgment and choice, we ſhould have preferred to any other; ſince there are many things in human life, which appear in the ſame unfavourable light, when meaſured by our imperfect underſtanding and miſguided deſires; though in reality, and upon the whole, they may be beſt for us. It is not a ſcheme, which recommends itſelf, by its agreeableneſs to our inclinations; but, which if true, muſt make its way, only by its own evidence, and the neceſſity of the caſe. For to ſee ourſelves confined to the hope of a reſurrection to life eternal (which to thoſe who firſt embraced Chriſtianity, was the greateſt encouragement and ſupport againſt the fear of death) is in danger of being turned by us into an argument for increaſing our terror: and ſuch is the fate of opinions; the ſublime expectation of the goſpel may come to be conſidered as a comparative diſadvantage, and a privation of ſo much happineſs, as we have been uſed to anticipate in our proſpects before it. The caſe of the firſt Chriſtians, and thoſe of the preſent day, differs in this; that, whereas the former had but very imperfect notions of the Divinity, and faint expectations of his favour and future happineſs, they would accept with joy, even a diſtant hope of immortality: but we, having been accuſtomed to conſider this immortality as our birthright, and an inheritance entailed upon our nature; not as the immediate gift of God by Jeſus Chriſt, to ſuch as he approves, and has determined to honour in this way; are ready to look with diſpleaſure upon a ſcheme, which deprives us of theſe flattering notions, or promiſes any thing leſs than uninterrupted conſciouſneſs and enjoyment. Yet it would be certainly better, if, ceaſing to argue from our prejudices and wiſhes to the real nature of things, and that which is, or ought to have been, the conſtitution of Providence, we confine ourſelves to an impartial, ſober examination of the Scriptures; forming our judgment and hope by the light which they afford us. And if it appear from thence, that the coming of Chriſt, his raiſing the dead to life, and conferring upon all the righteous the reward of immortality, are the objects to which we are continually referred, for our expectation and comfort; it is

without doubt our duty and wisdom, to bend our views entirely to these events; to confirm our minds, to wait with patience for the hope of the gospel, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God from heaven, by Jesus Christ, *which in his times he shall shew who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting.* Amen.

A

PARAPHRASE on 1 Cor. Chap. XV.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES and OBSERVATIONS.

TEXT.

1 MOreover, brethren, I declare unto you the goſpel which I preached unto you, which alſo you have received, and wherein ye ſtand:

2 By which alſo ye are ſaved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unleſs ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you firſt of all, that which I alſo received, how that Chriſt died for our ſins according to the ſcriptures:

PARAPHRASE.

I Once more declare to you, my Chriſtian brethren, the ſame goſpel, of which I formerly bore you the glad tidings, which you then received, and in which you have hitherto ſtood: which is the goſpel of your ſalvation, and by which you may obtain everlaſting life (if it has not altogether ſlipped your remembrance, with what deſign it was preached to you) unleſs indeed Chriſtianity be an idle fiction, and you have taken up the belief of it without any reaſonable foundation.

For I delivered to you, as the firſt and leading facts on which the goſpel depends, the following things (which were no invention of my own, but received upon the credible teſtimony of others, and confirmed by divine atteſtations) namely, that the Meſſiah, who was ſent of God to ſave mankind, after having, in the courſe of his miniſtry endured much hardſhip and contradiction of ſinful men, was condemned by the ruling power, and ſuffered death upon the croſs. A ſentence which he ſubmitted to, not for any ſins of his own; but being of a moſt holy and unblemiſhed

life, and deſerving a far different treatment, he died for the ſins of men, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring them unto God. This ſcene, how contrary ſoever to the expectations of his followers and of the nation in general, was exactly conformable to ancient prophecies concerning him: which help us to ſee, that nothing of this happened without the providence and foreknowledge of God; who delivered him up to be ſlain and crucified by wicked hands, that he might, by this extraordinary proceeding, commend his great friendſhip and love to the human race, and reconcile them to himſelf. *That* this great Exemplar, who fulfilled all righteouſneſs, and was in every thing ſubject to his Father, having yielded up his breath in the manner before mentioned, and dying, not in appearance but in reality, was laid in the grave. But death having no laſting power over him, becauſe God had thus appointed, in honour of his ſingular virtue, and to complete the ſcheme of our redemption, he aroſe on the third day, agreeable to the ſame prophecies. And *that* he ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs, to his apoſtles, the choſen witneſſes of this miraculous event, as well as to others, at different times; particularly, he was ſeen of Peter, then of the twelve. Afterward he was ſeen of more than five hundred brethren aſſembled in one place, of whom the greater part are living witneſſes at this day, but ſome of them have fallen aſleep in death. Then he was ſeen of James, afterward of all the apoſtles, at the time of his aſcenſion into heaven. And laſt of all he was ſeen of me in a heavenly viſion, who am, as it were, a diminutive and imperfect birth. For I am the leaſt of all the apoſtles, and not deſerving the name of an apoſtle, becauſe, though in ignorance and unbelief, and even perſuaded that I ought to do many things againſt

4 And that he was buried, and that he roſe again the third day according to the ſcriptures:

5 And that he was ſeen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

6 After that, he was ſeen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this preſent, but ſome are fallen aſleep.

7 After that he was ſeen of James, then of all the apoſtles.

8 And laſt of all he was ſeen of me alſo, as of one born out of due time.

9 For I am the leaſt of the apoſtles, that am not meet to be called an apoſtle, becauſe

becauſe I perſecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was beſtowed upon me, was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore, whether it were I or they, ſo we preach, and ſo ye believed.

12 Now if Chriſt be preached, that he roſe from the dead, how ſay ſome among you, that there is no reſurrection of the dead?

13 But if there be no reſurrection of the dead, then is Chriſt not riſen.

14 And if Chriſt be not riſen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is alſo vain.

15 Yea, and we are found falſe witneſſes of God; becauſe we have teſtified of God, that he raiſed up Chriſt: whom he raiſed not up, if ſo be that the dead riſe not.

againſt the name and religion of Jeſus, I once perſecuted that church which he purchaſed with his own blood, and redeemed unto God. But through the ſingular favour of God, who was willing to ſhew forth in me a pattern of diſtinguiſhed clemency, I was enlightened and called to this high office. And his goodneſs to me was not without its effect; for I have laboured in ſpreading the religion of Chriſt more than any of my fellow-apoſtles. Not that I arrogate any thing to myſelf from the greatneſs of my labours or the ſucceſs which attended them, but aſcribe both to God, the ſource of all, and to his power and goodneſs, which have never forſaken me. But whether it were I, or any other of the apoſtles, who have preached the goſpel in any part of the world, theſe were the facts, the truth of which we conſtantly and uniformly teſtified wherever we came, and which you, among ſo many others, have believed.

But if the reſurrection of Chriſt hath been ſo fully confirmed to you by our miracles and doctrine, whence has it happened that ſome among you ſo boldly affirm, that there is no ſuch thing as a reſurrection of the dead? and how can the belief of the goſpel conſiſt with a ſpeculation, which undermines the very baſis on which it is founded? For it is a natural and unavoidable inference, that, if the dead never riſe, then Chriſt, who died, cannot be riſen. And if Chriſt be ſtill among the dead, our preaching is mere mockery and grimace, and your faith and confidence as Chriſtians is utterly groundleſs. And, what muſt further aggravate our folly and guilt, we are in this caſe found falſe witneſſes concerning God, and the contrivers of a wicked impoſition upon the world in an affair of the higheſt moment, and which greatly intereſts the hopes or fears of all men: becauſe we have teſtified in the name of God, and as by a commiſſion from him, that he

hath raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, whom he hath not raiſed, if it be true that the dead never riſe. For I repeat it again, if the dead do not riſe, Chriſt muſt ſtill be under the power of death, and is not riſen, as we have ſo often atteſted. And if Chriſt be not riſen, your confidence in God, which is founded upon this event, is fooliſh and empty; and you are yet under the condemnation and power of ſin, having no hope of being freed from death, in which it reigns ſo widely and triumphantly over the human race, ſince the being whom we teſtified to have been conſtituted of God for this purpoſe, and exalted to be the Prince and Saviour of men, is, upon ſuch a ſuppoſition, ſtill holden in the bonds of the grave, and unable to deliver himſelf or others. It follows likewiſe, as a neceſſary conſequence from the ſame principle, even though you allow Chriſt to be riſen, that thoſe who have already reſigned their breath in the faith of Jeſus, and with the expectation of his ſecond appearing, are totally periſhed. Nay the martyrs, who have borne a publick teſtimony to the truth of the goſpel and ſealed it with their blood, inſtead of exchanging a temporary being for honour and immortality, have ſold their lives for nought, and died juſt as a fool dieth. And all who henceforward go down to the grave, before the coming of the Lord, whether in the ordinary courſe of nature, or through the violence of evil men, are ſinking in like manner into remedileſs deſtruction; if there be no reſurrection, nor return from that houſe of everlaſting ſilence and oblivion. Conſider well to how many abſurd and frightful conſequences this one error will reduce you. If the preſent life comprehend the whole of our expectations from the Meſſiah, and we look for nothing more from him, at beſt, than what a great prince of the world might confer upon his favourites and adherents, we are certainly

16 For if the dead riſe not, then is not Chriſt raiſed.

17 And if Chriſt be not raiſed, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your ſins.

18 Then they alſo which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt, are periſhed.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable.

the moſt abuſed and unfortunate of mankind, and our caſe is deſerving of the higheſt compaſſion. For we embrace a religion which commands us to deny ourſelves, to take up the croſs and follow our leader; and thus, when preſſed by the madneſs of a wicked age, to reſign (hard ſacrifice!) our lives and our hopes in him together.

20 But now is Chriſt riſen from the dead, and become the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept.

But God forbid that I ſhould indulge ſuch a melancholy thought, when Chriſt is indeed riſen from the dead, and not for himſelf only, but as the firſt-fruits of ſlumbering duſt, and the earneſt of a plentiful harveſt. For ſince by a man death firſt entered into the world, by a man alſo cometh the reſurrection of the dead.

21 For ſince by man came death, by man came alſo the reſurrection of the dead.

For as all the deſcendants of Adam die, and follow the fate of their firſt parent, as partaking of his imperfect conſtitution; ſo all the faithful followers of Chriſt ſhall, after him, be reſtored to life, and conformed to the image of their glorious leader.

22 For as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.

But each one in his proper and natural order; Chriſt as the firſt-fruits, in the firſt place, afterwards all the true diſciples of Chriſt, who ſhall be raiſed at the time of his ſecond appearance.

23 But every man in his own order: Chriſt the firſt-fruits, afterwards they that are Chriſt's, at his coming.

Then cometh the end, and full completion of the promiſes which God hath made to his Meſſiah; when Chriſt ſhall deliver the kingdom, which has ſo long been poſſeſſed by others, to God, even the Father, when he ſhall aboliſh all empire, dominion, and authority, which now ſubſiſts throughout the world, and remove every thing out of the way which oppoſes itſelf to his greatneſs.

24 Then cometh the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he ſhall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.

For he muſt reign till God hath put *all things* under his feet. He ſhall be a king for ever, and triumph over all his enemies. Such is the extent of the divine commiſſion, and ſuch the unchangeable purpoſe of eternal wiſdom and goodneſs.

25 For he muſt reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Death, the laſt and moſt formidable enemy of mankind, ſhall alſo be deſtroyed, and no more be able to reſume his

26 The laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed, is death.

dominion

dominion over the righteous. For God hath ſubjected *all things* to the power and rule of his Anointed. But when he ſaith that *all things* are put under his feet, it is paſt a doubt that this muſt be underſtood with an exception of the Eternal Being, whoſe uncontrouled and all-ſubduing energy hath reduced them to this ſtate of homage and ſubjection. When therefore all things, throughout the whole circle of the world to come, ſhall be ſubmitted to the Son, and he ſhall be advanced to the utmoſt pitch of greatneſs, even then, as much as before, ſhall the Son himſelf be ſubject to the Father; ſo that God ſhall be all in all, the ſupreme object of reverence and worſhip, the only ſtay and confidence of his redeemed, and the ſingle indiſputed ſource of their happineſs and joy.

27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he ſaith, all things are put under him, it is manifeſt that he is excepted which did put all things under him.

28 And when all things ſhall be ſubdued unto him, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him that hath put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

But to return to my former argument: I juſt now aſſerted, that, if we have no hope in Chriſt beyond the preſent life, we are of all men the moſt deſerving of compaſſion; our condition is quite deplorable, and our conduct in voluntarily embracing it, can be aſcribed to nothing ſhort of madneſs. For what words can paint their diſtreſſing ſituation, or what terms be ſufficient to ſet forth their ſignal folly, who, having no one advantage which they can rationally expect from their profeſſion of Chriſtianity in this world, but on the contrary abundance of trouble and perſecution, the loſs of all things and of life itſelf, can really be conſidered in no better light than as being baptiſed for the dead and initiated into the grave, if indeed the dead never riſe? and upon what principles muſt we account for ſuch complicated abſurdity in human conduct; or what is it, muſt we ſay, induces men to embrace a religion which opens to them no proſpects but thoſe of certain and everlaſting perdition? For what reaſons alſo, inform the world if you can, for what reaſons do we, do I and my fellow apoſtles, expoſe ourſelves

29 Elſe what ſhall they do which are baptiſed for the dead, if the dead riſe not at all? why are they then baptiſed for the dead?

30 And why ſtand we in jeopardy every hour?

to hourly dangers in ſuch a deſperate cauſe? Is this too for nothing more than the cold conſolation of lying for ever in the grave, and gaining a peaceable admiſſion into thoſe dreary manſions, where there is neither knowledge nor device, and all that we can hope is, that the wicked ſhall ceaſe from troubling, and the weary be at reſt? I do not in the leaſt exaggerate the troubles and diſtreſſes, to which we are ſubject, by our character and office as preachers of the goſpel of God. I proteſt by that rejoicing which I have in Chriſt Jeſus our common Lord, which I have on your account, who are the glory and joy of your faithful apoſtle—a rejoicing, which light as it may appear in the eſteem of ſome among you, is to me the moſt real thing in the world, and the only ſupport which I have under my numerous preſſures——by all my hopes then, as a Chriſtian and an Apoſtle, I ſolemnly declare, that I undergo trials ſevere as death itſelf, almoſt every day that I live. To inſtance only in one at preſent: when I waged a moſt unequal combat with fierce and devouring beaſts at Epheſus, was there any advantage that could have induced me thus madly to hazard my life; provided all my happineſs were at ſtake upon this point of being, and I had no views, but ſuch as were common to the tribe of vain, timid, and death-ſcared mortals? No. In that caſe let me eat my bread in quietneſs, and enjoy, while I can, that portion of good, which is the gift of God—rather than compaſs ſea and land, and face ten thouſand dangers, to propagate a religion falſe in itſelf, and deſtructive to thoſe who preach it, and, by a conduct the moſt abſurdly wicked, anticipate a calamity, which awaits me ſoon enough in the ordinary courſe of nature. Do not ſuffer yourſelves to be ſeduced: I ſee that, according to an old obſervation, Bad company, and the diſcourſes of a few

31 I proteſt by your rejoicing which I have in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, I die daily.

32 If after the manner of men I have fought with beaſts at Epheſus, what advantageth it me, if the dead riſe not? Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

deſigning

deſigning people, are in danger of corrupting your honeſt and ſimple manners. Awake then, recover yourſelves from this dangerous illuſion, as becomes you; and do not err any longer, in a matter of ſo much conſequence to your virtue and peace of mind. I am grieved to find that ſome of you ſeem entirely ignorant of the divine nature and operations: and I ſpeak it to your ſhame, who have now for ſome time been bleſt with a revelation, which unfolds the power and benevolence of the Deity, in ſo great an extent, to the human mind.

34 Awake to righteouſneſs, and ſin not; for ſome have not the knowledge of God: I ſpeak this to your ſhame.

But, notwithſtanding all that I have been ſaying, I foreſee that ſome of you will ſtill object and aſk, "How is it that the dead "can be reſtored to life? which appears to "us a thing incredible, and almoſt to exceed "the power of omnipotence. Reſolve us, "beſides, with what bodies do they come "forth? ſeeing, as to the greater number of "the dead, their own muſt have long ſince "mouldered away, and lie in an undiſtin-"guiſhed heap with the common duſt." Vain, inconſiderate objectors! Have you never obſerved, that the ſeed, which is caſt into the earth, does not ſpring up and produce its fruit, till its texture be in a manner diſſolved? And thus what we may call the death and corruption of the ſeed, is prior to its reviviſication and ſecond life. I will carry on the illuſtration, and apply it to your next difficulty. The ſeed which huſbandmen throw into the ground, is not the ſame body which afterward ſprings up, but the bare grain (of wheat, for inſtance, or any ſort you pleaſe) without the ſtem, leaf, and other appendages of a perfect plant. But God giveth all theſe in the ſeaſon of its appearance, and provides for it ſuch a body as it hath pleaſed him to appoint in the original conſtitution of nature, and for every ſeed its proper and ſuitable body. And ſhall

35 But ſome man will ſay, How are the dead raiſed up? and with what body do they come?

36 Thou fool, that which thou ſoweſt, is not quickened, except it die.

37 And that which thou ſoweſt, thou ſoweſt not that body that ſhall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of ſome other grain.

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleaſed him, and to every ſeed his own body.

shall we imagine, that the Being who annually renews the face of nature, and gives fresh life to the world of plants and vegetables (undoubtedly with the most benevolent intentions, that they may contribute to the support and delight of mankind) is either unwilling to exert himself in behalf of reasonable beings, or can find no resources in his power and wisdom for restoring *men* to life, and furnishing them with such bodies as are adapted to a more perfect and durable state of existence? This will appear still less credible, if we consider the immense variety, which reigns through the works of nature; and in what manner the Creator of all things has furnished the almost endless tribes of animals, which inhabit this globe, with a form and temperament peculiar to themselves, and at the same time exquisitely accommodated to their condition and ways of living. So that even all *flesh* is not of the same kind; but there is one sort appropriated to men, another to beasts, another to fishes, and another again to birds. And as there are terrestrial, so also celestial bodies, which differ from those on earth, and rise one above another in honour and pre-eminence. For there is one glory given to the sun, another to the moon; and the stars differ among themselves in lustre and magnitude. In like manner the resurrection of the dead, or the state of things which will take place hereafter, shall vastly exceed our present condition of mortality. For the frail houses of clay, which we now inhabit, are no more comparable to the glorious bodies which God will then give to his saints, than the most inconsiderable clod of the ground on which we tread, is to the bright luminaries of heaven. To acquire some faint idea of this superiority, let us consider, that a body is sown and buried in the ground, when it is just ready to putrify and be entirely dissolved; but it is raised incorruptible, and

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

40 There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption:

without the leaſt tendency to a decay: it is conſigned to the ground in a ſtate of diſhonour, when the breath of God being departed, the duſt returns to duſt, and mingles with its native earth; but that which is raiſed appears with peculiar marks of honour and dignity, being allied to heaven, and aſſimilated to the image of our glorious Saviour: it is ſown in weakneſs, the fine machine being totally diſordered, the ſprings of life exhauſted, its action ceaſed, and the organs of ſenſe no longer able to perform any part of their wonted ſervice; but it is raiſed with acceſſions of power and ſtrength, and with an improved capacity of performing all the actions of a nobler life. An animal body is ſown in the ground, once endued with the breath of life, but a life imperfect and momentary, ſubject to diſeaſe, ſorrow, and travail; but a ſpiritual body is raiſed, of a more refined and perfect conſtitution, and which is ſuperior to all the pains and evils of mortality.

43 It is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory: it is ſown in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power.

44 It is ſown a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a ſpiritual body.

There is both an animal and a ſpiritual body. Of the firſt of theſe we have proof in the original formation of man: and it is thus written concerning our firſt parent Adam, when God animated the clay, which he had formed, with the breath of life, *And man became a living ſoul*, or animal. Of the ſecond we have an example in the great reſtorer of the human race, who is become a quickening ſpirit; not only raiſed to this moſt perfect life in his own perſon, but inveſted with the power and office of conferring it upon others, and making them conformable to his likeneſs. However, the ſpiritual body is not firſt in order of time, but the animal conſtitution took place in the beginning; and that which is ſpiritual will ſucceed to it. It was the firſt man who was formed out of the ground, like his original, earthly and corruptible: the ſecond man is the Lord, who ſhall deſcend from heaven; being,

45 And ſo it is written, The firſt man Adam was made a living ſoul, the laſt Adam was made a quickening ſpirit.

46 Howbeit, that was not firſt which is ſpiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is ſpiritual:

47 The firſt man is of the earth, earthy: the ſecond man, is the Lord from heaven.

being, as was just now said, the pattern and introducer of a more perfect constitution. Such as was the man who was taken from the ground, such must they be who spring from this imperfect original: such as is the heavenly man, such also are they who are heavenly, like him, the children of God and of the resurrection. And as we have already borne the similitude of the earthly man, from whom we are descended, in our feeble and mortal bodies; so we must hereafter bear the similitude of the heavenly man, and be conformed to the image of our illustrious leader. And this not merely by way of advantage or distinction, which God is pleased to confer upon righteous men; but it is a change which must necessarily take place in every heir of immortality: because it is impossible that this frail system of flesh and and blood, which we derive from our first progenitor, and by which we are subject to all manner of disease, and at length to death itself, which is its final dissolution, should inherit the everlasting kingdom of God; or that corruption should become the heir of incorruption and endless life.

48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Attend and I will acquaint you with a wonderful event, of which you seem not to be aware: We shall not all of us die; for those upon whom the very last days of the world shall come, shall never taste death: but, considerable as this exemption may appear, so as to be greatly desired and envied by us, it is not of such a nature as to place them, who survive in this manner, foremost in the participation of the divine goodness, or put them in a better condition for receiving the promised inheritance.——For, contrary to what you may be ready to think of yourselves, and without being better informed, they who continue to the end of the world will stand in as much need of the peculiar favour of God, and his interposition by Jesus Christ, to qualify them for

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

the durable bleſſedneſs of heaven, as if they had been held under the power of death through a long courſe of ages. Therefore, though we do not all die, we ſhall all be changed from what we are at preſent, and transformed at the glorious appearance of Chriſt into the image of his glory. This will be effected by an inſtantaneous operation of the divine power, when the laſt trumpet ſhall ſound. For this event ſhall certainly take place, and the dead ſhall be firſt raiſed in a ſtate of incorruption, that we may not be beforehand with thoſe who ſleep, in the poſſeſſion of eternal life; and then we ſhall be changed, that we may be together with them and with the Lord, for ever and ever. For in order to this it is neceſſary, that, as the dead are raiſed incorruptible, ſo the frail corruptible bodies of thoſe who remain ſhould aſſume incorruption, and this mortal conſtitution put on immortality.

When this event, ſo peculiar and intereſting, has been accompliſhed, then will be uſed, with the utmoſt propriety, that triumphant exclamation of the prophet's, Death is ſwallowed up completely in victory. O Death, what is now become of thy dreaded ſting? O Grave, where is now thy wonted victory? Becauſe the firſt is become impotent to deſtroy, and the latter diſappointed of his looked for prey. The ſting of Death, with which he reduces millions to the duſt, is Sin. And the power and force of Sin, that mortal weapon with which he is armed, is the Law, and its condemning ſentence. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory over Death, Sin, and the Law, by Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord, and the inſtrument of his ſingular benevolence to the human race.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be firm and ſtedfaſt in this faith, do not ſuffer yourſelves to be moved from the hope of the goſpel; but always abound in the work of the Lord,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump (for the trumpet ſhall ſound) and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and we ſhall be changed.

53 For this corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this mortal muſt put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in victory.

55 O Death, where is thy ſting? O Grave, where is thy victory?

56 The ſting of Death is Sin, and the ſtrength of Sin is the Law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſ-

forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Lord, bringing forth the fruits of righteouſneſs, which are to the praiſe of him who hath called us to glory and virtue; being aſſured, upon the moſt reaſonable evidence, that, notwithſtanding the arts which ſome new teachers have uſed to inſtil into your minds a contrary perſuaſion, your labour will not be in vain in the Lord. For faithful is he, who hath called you, who will not diſappoint your hope and confidence, if you keep it ſtedfaſt unto the end.

NOTES.

NOTES.

Verſe 1. THE Apoſtle by this preface ſignifies, that the doctrine of a reſurrection, upon which he is going to inſiſt, is no invention of his own, nor a later addition to the goſpel, but a primary and eſſential part of it. The word γνωριζω, according to the frequent uſe of it in the New Teſtament, denotes the *declaring ſomething before unknown.* This ſignification of *making a thing known* is to be found in other Greek writers, και γνωριζει τον αδελφον αυτω, and brings him acquainted with her brother Plutarch. *In Fabio*, Vol. I. p. 404. l. 3. Ed. Bryan. πυθομενω δε τινομα, γνωρισας αυτον ειπεν, making himſelf known to him that enquired his name, he ſays, &c. *Id. in Antonio.* Vol. V. p. 131. l. 13. But what has been obſerved peculiar in the uſe of the word here, is that the Apoſtle employs it to denote the *repetition or confirmation of a thing with which they were already acquainted.* It would be impoſſible for the moſt ſagacious critick to account for all the variety of ſenſes in which a word may be taken. And as language is in a conſtant ſtate of fluctuation, new ones will unavoidably take place, in every place and period of time where it is ſpoken, and every different author that writes in it. The Apoſtle ſeems to have choſen this form of addreſs, for the ſake of engaging their attention, and giving more weight and ſolemnity to that which he is about to ſay, as containing the foundation and evidence of their Chriſtian hope. See *Gal.* i. 11. The goſpel itſelf, as far as that word may ſimply denote the divine miſſion of Jeſus, and his reſurrection from the dead, by which he *was declared to be the Son of God with power*, does not appear to have been ſuſpected by any perſons to whom he was writing. The new teachers in the church of Corinth, however they had mangled the ſuperſtructure, and deſtroyed the ſymmetry and arrangement of the edifice, had not touched the foundation, nor proceeded to *lay any other than that which was already laid, Chriſt Jeſus.* But the Apoſtle, like a ſkilful maſter, when any part of the building had been ſhaken, ſees that the foundations are ſecure, before he proceeds to repair the breaches which had been made in the ſuperſtructure.

in which ye ſtand] The Chriſtians at Corinth, as has been obſerved, were ſtill believers in Chriſt's reſurrection; therefore the Apoſtle ſays, that goſpel *in which ye ſtand.* It can ſcarce eſcape our obſervation here, how much more gently the Apoſtle treats the hereticks, as they are called, of his days, than has ever been done ſince. If any doctrines may be reckoned fundamental, and eſſential to the goſpel of Chriſt, that of a reſurrection of the dead is certainly one, which ſome of the Corinthians denied: yet he does not cut them off from the church, or beſtow on them abuſive appellations. In after times there was no doctrine ſo obſcure, or to be deduced from Scripture by ever ſuch diſtant conſequences, which did not draw upon thoſe who denied it, the moſt bitter invectives and

execrations.

execrations. And one would be inclined to think, upon reading the history of the church, that their zeal for any ſpeculation increaſed in proportion to its uncertainty or falſhood. Whatever precepts of a ſeverer kind were to be met with in the apoſtolick writings, againſt ſuch as cauſed diviſions, or taught any thing contrary to ſound doctrine, they were conſtantly inſiſted upon and preſſed to their utmoſt rigour: while thoſe leſſons of moderation which they both taught and practiſed were forgotten, or came to be conſidered as of dangerous conſequence to religion and ſociety. Thus many abſurdities ſpread and were perpetuated, by the miſplaced zeal of the men who laboured to confute them; and many perſons were driven farther from the church, through the heat with which contentions were managed on both ſides, who might eaſily have been reconciled to it at the firſt by gentleneſs and argument.

Ver. 2. Kypke, in his obſervations on the New Teſtament, ſhews by ſeveral inſtances, that τινι λογῳ is no Hebraiſm, being uſed by approved Greek writers; and ſignifies *for what cauſe*, as it is rendered, *Acts* x. 29. It ſeems therefore that it ſhould be rendered ſo here, *if you remember for what cauſe I preached the goſpel unto you*; if there be a trajection in the words, as is commonly ſuppoſed. I do not aſſent to the ſame writer's obſervation, that this and the following clauſes are mentioned by the Apoſtle as two conditions of their being finally ſaved. The laſt is undoubtedly neceſſary to the ſalvation which he is ſpeaking of, becauſe if the goſpel be not true, we can never be ſaved by it. But neither of the clauſes ſeem to have been introduced with this deſign. The firſt is a tacit but ſevere reproof to them, for having departed from the truth, as if they had forgotten both the matter and deſign of his preaching: the laſt expreſſes the confidence he had in his own cauſe, and the truth of the doctrine which he was going to defend, as ſtanding upon the ſame foundation with their faith in Chriſt, crucified and riſen from the dead. If it could be ſhewn, that τινι λογῳ ſignifies ſometimes *quo pacto*, *in the manner which*, as ſome criticks underſtand it, the paſſage might be rendered, without a trajection, thus, *by which you are alſo ſaved, in the manner which I preached unto you*, namely, by the power of Chriſt, who will deſcend to raiſe the dead and judge the whole world, *if ye yet remember*.

Our verſion does not expreſs intelligibly the ſenſe of εκλος εἰ μη εικη επιστευσατε, by rendering it ſo literally, *unleſs ye have believed in vain*. *To believe in vain*, according to the uſe of ancient languages, is to believe without juſt reaſon and authority, giving credit to idle reports as true and authentick. Thus Plutarch, ſpeaking of ſome ſtory which paſſed current, ſays, ταυτα ημεις εφομεν εν τοις των εικη πιστευομενων, *this I ſaid was one of thoſe tales which are believed without any good authority*. Symphoſiac. lib. 1. quæſt. 6. The Latins uſed *credere fruſtra* or *temere* in the ſame caſe.

Nunc temere inſimulas, credendoque omnia fruſtra
Ipſa vetas iram pondus habere tuam. Ovid amor. L. 2. El. 7. l. 13.

There is another paſſage of the ſame Poet, where the phraſe is uſed in a manner very ſimilar to the Apoſtle here,

Ille pia (ſi non temere hæc creduntur) in arvo
Inter honoratos excipietur avos. Ad Liviam Auguſtam. l. 329.

Kypke,

Kypke, in his obſervations quoted above, takes notice that εἰ μὴ, for *except* or *unleſs*, which has long been a ſuſpected phraſe, is uſed more than ten times by Lucian. It is alſo uſed by Plutarch, in the life of Demoſthenes, Vol. IV. p. 416. l. 9.

Ver. 3. In about thirty paſſages of the New Teſtament, Chriſt is ſaid to die, ſhed his blood, or offer himſelf *for us:* in about half a dozen more he is ſaid to die, or offer himſelf *for our ſins*; for I omit thoſe paſſages where the idea is more complex, as properly belonging to another conſideration. As the firſt of theſe repreſentations perfectly expreſſes the benevolence of the Saviour, and his great friendſhip to the race of men; ſo the latter ſeems intended to exhibit beſides, the ſpotleſs innocence and integrity of his whole character, *who did no evil, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

Under the preſent unequal diſtribution of things, in which a perfect regard is not had to the moral characters of men, in the treatment they meet with from the hand of providence, or from their fellow-creatures, we ſee that, as many are puniſhed for their own offences, ſo perhaps an equal or even greater number ſuffer for the folly and wickedneſs of others. An innocent individual often partakes of the calamity or puniſhment which lights upon the guilty; or even ſometimes bears it in his room, while, through the iniquity or imperfection of human judgment, or other cauſes, the guilty perſon entirely eſcapes. A whole family ſuffers for the miſconduct of its head, or any particular member: nay, the proſperity of nations is ſignally affected by the weakneſs or corruption of ſuch as are entruſted with the adminiſtration of their government.

Delirant quoties reges, plectuntur Achivi.

Thus calamities may become univerſal, which, if ſtrict retribution had place, would not have been felt by above two or three perſons. But it is a law given us, together with our ſocial natures, and inſeparable from the ſtate in which we live; that, as the virtues, ſo, the vices of particular men ſhould diffuſe their influence abroad, and that ſociety ſhould be capable of being hurt by the one, and benefited by the other. It is by means of this cloſe connexion, which ſubſiſts between different parts of the human race, that the conſequences of our vices may be entailed upon poſterity, and deſcend through ſeveral generations. When, through the imperfection of the preſent diſpenſation, the children of wicked parents are in this manner involved in the puniſhment inflicted upon their fathers, they are ſaid in Scripture language to bear the idolatry and iniquity of their fathers, that is, to ſuffer not for their own, but their parents faults, *Numb.* xiv. 33. It ſeems to have been an opinion which has generally obtained in the world, that all calamities which befall men are the effect of ſome ſins committed by themſelves or others. We need not examine how juſtly, ſince our Saviour has evidently aſſigned another reaſon, *John* ix. 3. in the caſe of the man born blind: from whence it appears, that the Maker and Lord of all beings may wiſely exerciſe his creatures with trials and ſufferings, for other ends than the puniſhment of ſin. But this notion ſeems to have given riſe to certain forms of expreſſion very proper to convey an opinion of the ſufferer's character, and which perhaps originally had no further deſign. In the fifty-third chapter of Iſaiah, we have a finiſhed deſcription of ſuffering innocence: and though there are ſome obſcure paſſages in it, which poſſibly have never been well

well underſtood, yet if we examine it with attention we ſhall ſee reaſon to think, that every circumſtance was deſigned to heighten our idea of the character introduced, by ſhewing the moſt extraordinary merit ſtruggling beneath a load of mercileſs oppreſſion. Deſerted by friends, beſet with enemies, without any protection but his ſingular integrity, yet firm and unſhaken amidſt the ſtorm which burſts upon him, he appears before his accuſers in all the majeſty of conſcious virtue, ſilent becauſe he deſpiſed their malice, or foreſaw the inutility of a formal defence, where every art of falſhood and calumny was practiſed to deſtroy him. The Prophet in ſurprize to ſee the illuſtrious good man involved in ſuch deep diſtreſs, as if he had caſt about in vain to find ſome blemiſh in his character, ſome fault, to puniſh which providence permitted him to be thus afflicted, at length exclaims, *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our ſorrows.* He could not have more ſtrongly expreſſed the perfect innocence of his life, and the greatneſs of his ſufferings together, than by the following ſtrokes. *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities: the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed. All we like ſheep have gone aſtray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* He was ſo free from the ſuſpicion of guilt, that his calamities muſt be charged to the offences of others: they had ſinned, and he was afflicted. And ſo extraordinary were his ſufferings, for their number and greatneſs, that, whereas the reſt of the nation had been very corrupt and wicked, it ſeemed as if God had laid upon him the iniquities of them all. If there ever was a character, which on account of its excellence deſerved ſo honourable a teſtimony, it was certainly that of Jeſus, who could appeal to his enemies in ſuch terms as theſe, *which of you convinceth me of ſin*, and was ſlain by wicked hands for nothing elſe but his well-doing.

This phraſe of *ſuffering for the ſins of men*, contains no very complex idea, and as it neceſſarily implies the innocence of the ſufferer, ſo it does not neceſſarily imply any thing farther. And how much ſoever we may ſuppoſe the expreſſion capable of being extended, or of receiving more remote applications from the connexion in which it is found, and the uſage of particular writers; yet it muſt be allowed, that the firſt and moſt natural thought ſuggeſted by it, is, that the perſon who ſuffered on ſuch an account was greatly injured and abuſed. For every man, who is puniſhed for his own offences, does always in a certain degree, ſuffer juſtly: but he who ſuffers for the offences of others muſt neceſſarily, ſo far forth, ſuffer undeſervedly.

Delicta majorum immeritus lues. HORACE, Lib. III. Od. 6.

——— *Negligis immeritis nociturum*
Poſtmodo te natis forſan committere fraudem. Id. Lib. I. Od. 28.

And ſeeing it is the ordinance of nature, and unavoidable without a conſtant ſeries of miracles, that, in the complicated ſcheme of human ſociety, the innocent ſhould frequently ſuffer for the guilty, governors for the people, and people for the governors, fathers for the children, and children for the fathers, even to diſtant generations, and one individual and part of a community for another; as much as it is on the other hand, that ſome ſhould be benefited by the wiſdom and virtue of others: there is nothing inconſiſtent with our ideas of the moral government of God here, in ſuppoſing that he

ſhould permit an innocent and righteous being, raiſed up for the reformation and ſalvation of the reſt of the world, to ſuffer for their ſins, and be expoſed to ill-treatment through the malice and wickedneſs of the age in which he lived. And it is plain, that appearing and acting under ſuch a conſtitution of things, he muſt ſubmit to all the laws of it, and bear the conſequences of his attachment to truth and righteouſneſs, whatever they were, without a ſpecial interpoſition of heaven in his favour, for which it does not appear from the general conduct of providence, that innocence alone is a ſufficient reaſon. And this ſingle conſideration perhaps is enough to vindicate the propriety of ſuch a proceeding, though no other purpoſes could have been anſwered by it, nor any immediate benefits derived from his ſufferings to the human race.

The croſs of Chriſt was a ſubject of great offence to an ill-judging age, which had been accuſtomed to look on grandeur and proſperity as inſeparable companions to men of eminent goodneſs, and the moſt certain marks by which to diſtinguiſh the real favourites of heaven. This offence the Apoſtle labours to remove by two conſiderations, namely, that he died for our ſins, and not for any deſert of his own, and that he died according to the ſcriptures, which ſignified ſo remarkable an event, together with the glory which ſhould follow.

Ver. 8. εκτρωμα, an abortion, denotes thoſe births which come before their proper time, and which, if they live at all, are for that reaſon generally weak, deformed, and much below the uſual ſtature of men. To which laſt circumſtance the Apoſtle plainly alludes, when he ſays, *I am the leaſt of all the apoſtles, and not worthy* or fit *to be* called an apoſtle. In the ſame manner Horace calls a certain dwarf *abortive*, who, as we are told, did not exceed two feet in height.

——— ———*Ut abortivus fuit olim*
Siſiphus.

It is therefore a term of diminution and contempt. The Apoſtle ſeems to have applied it to himſelf, not on account of the time of his converſion, which was *after* the reſt, nor to the ſuddenneſs of it, nor to what he was after having embraced the goſpel, and undertaken the apoſtolic office; but ſolely on account of his former conduct as a perſecutor of the church, which he frequently condemns in very ſevere language. The idea which he gives of himſelf here, is that of a weak dimunitive infant, and of little hopes, as ſuch births generally are: which repreſentation is undoubtedly figurative, and intended to ſignify his threatening ſituation, when by a mad oppoſition to the goſpel of Chriſt he was walking on the brink of ruin, and urging his deſtruction. It was then the mercy of God prevented him, and gave him new life. It is obſervable, that in former times ſuch births were frequently expoſed by the parents, and left to periſh, either becauſe they were accounted of ill omen; or that their weakneſs and deformity ſtifled the voice of parental affection, or cauſed an abſolute deſpair of being able to rear them. The Apoſtle might poſſibly have ſome alluſion to this circumſtance of diſtreſs in his own caſe. We have a deſcription of the like kind in the ſixteenth chapter of Ezekiel, where the houſe of Iſrael is repreſented as a child expoſed and dropt in the open fields. *None eye pitied thee, but thou waſt caſt out into the open field to the loathing*

of

of thy perſon in the day that thou waſt born. And when I paſſed by thee and ſaw thee polluted in thine own blood, I ſaid unto thee when thou waſt in thy blood, Live. The Apoſtle always conſiders his perſecution of the church as very criminal, and ſtiles himſelf for this reaſon the firſt or *chief of ſinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15, though his guilt was undoubtedly much alleviated by his ignorance, and that he did not engage in a wilful oppoſition to the truth, or knowingly fight againſt God.

There is another caſe in which St. Paul ſpeaks of himſelf in low and depreciating terms, I mean as an apoſtle and preacher of the goſpel. For though he aſſerts the dignity and authority of his office, and the fidelity of his own conduct in the execution of it, whenever they were attacked by falſe teachers, nor ſcruples to ſet himſelf upon a level with the greateſt of the Apoſtles; yet he conſiders himſelf as nothing before God. Beſides the ſtrong expreſſion in the tenth verſe of this chapter, we have others to the ſame purpoſe in the third chapter of this epiſtle, ver. 7. *So then he that planteth is nothing, and he that watereth is nothing, but God that giveth the increaſe*; and 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. *Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves, to think any thing as of ourſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God, who alſo hath made us able miniſters of the New Teſtament.* Here we can ſcarce fail to recollect acknowledgments of the ſame kind ſo often repeated by the humble Jeſus, who aſcribes every thing that he ſaid or did, in the capacity of a divine teacher, to the Being who ſent him. *The words that I ſpeak, I ſpeak not of myſelf, but the Father who dwelleth in me, he doth the works*, John xiv. 10. *My doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me*, vii. 16. *Verily the Son can do nothing of himſelf*, v. 19. *I can of mine own ſelf do nothing*, 30. And it was highly fitting that mankind ſhould be taught to think in this manner concerning a religion, which owed its birth and progreſs entirely to the Supreme mind. The goodneſs which moved, the wiſdom which planned, and the power which executed the ſcheme, were not theirs but his, in which no other beings had any ſhare but as ſubordinate agents. The inſtruments employed in this grand undertaking were choſen and called of God, and received their commiſſion and qualifications from him. Chriſt, the head of them, was the power and the wiſdom of God, or as St. Paul expreſſes it in another place, had all the fulneſs of the DEITY—expreſſions undoubtedly intimating to us the dependance of the whole ſcheme upon the eternal cauſe, when the higheſt agents, employed in the conduct and execution of it, derived all their efficacy from him, were wiſe with *his* wiſdom, ſtrong with *his* power, and filled with *his* fulneſs. In ſhort, *all things* were of God, who was the prime intelligent active cauſe, and the life of the whole diſpenſation. After this we cannot wonder at ſome expreſſions which we meet with in the epiſtolary writings, where Chriſtians are ſtiled *the workmanſhip of God*; their faith is repreſented as proceeding not *from themſelves*, but from *God*, and it is ſaid to be *God who worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleaſure*; ſince all the means employed in the inſtruction and reformation of mankind were *his*. The Chriſtians fought againſt idolatry, and every evil work, under the banner and auſpices of heaven, if I may be allowed the expreſſion; and therefore their agency and ſucceſs may both, with juſtice, be aſcribed to him, who is the firſt promoter, the grand approver, and the final rewarder of their well-doing.

Ver. 15. The words ψευδομαρτυρες Θεου, which literally ſignify, as our verſion gives them, *falſe witneſſes of God*, may either be rendered *falſe witneſſes concerning God*, as the idea of being God's falſe witneſſes has no place in the argument, and concludes neither for nor againſt the apoſtles; or elſe we may conſider it as an Hebraiſm, where the name of God is added to any thing merely for the ſake of exaggerating the ſubject, and raiſing our ideas of its greatneſs, as if we ſhould ſay *falſe witneſſes of the firſt magnitude*, to denote their enormous guilt. This, the critickks have obſerved, is according to the uſe of the Old Teſtament writers, and ſometimes imitated in the New. And ſome have thought that Rom. x. 2. where St. Paul bears record to the zeal of his countrymen, the words ζηλον Θεου would more properly be rendered *a flaming zeal*, than *a zeal of God*.

Κατα Θεου may be rendered *concerning God*, as our verſion has it; or *againſt God*, with ſome others; or *in the name of God*, according to Dr. Whitby: each of which interpretations is agreeable to the genius of the language, and would tolerably ſuit the connexion of the place under conſideration. But as to ſay that *they had teſtified in the name of God*, is not only agreeable to the truth of the caſe, but furniſhes a circumſtance which greatly aggravates the guilt of the apoſtles, upon a ſuppoſition that they were found falſe witneſſes, and could hardly eſcape the attention of the writer, this ſenſe appears preferable to the others.

Ver 17. Chriſt tells the Phariſees, John viii. 24. *Except ye believe that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins*, i. e. "unleſs you repent of your wicked oppoſition "to the truth, and receive the offers of ſalvation which I bring from heaven, "you will never be forgiven." All obſtinate impenitent offenders, who reject the counſel of God in their favour, are yet in their ſins; becauſe till they repent they have no hope of pardon and acceptance, but as St. John expreſſes it, *the wrath of God abideth on them*. The caſe would be the ſame with *penitents*, if all hopes of the divine mercy were excluded. For the pardon of ſin is nothing but a remiſſion of the puniſhment due to offenders, and a reſtoration to the privileges and advantages which they have forfeited. Hence it is that the future ſalvation, and actual reſtitution of ſinners to life and happineſs, which takes place at the coming of Chriſt, is ſometimes ſtiled the forgiveneſs of ſins. In this manner St. Peter addreſſes himſelf to the Jews, *Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out*, or that you may be ſaved, *when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord*, Acts iii. 19. and Chriſt is ſaid to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveneſs of ſins, Acts v. 31.

To give repentance is to furniſh the means of changing the mind and conduct with advantage, ſo that what has been done before on a different or contrary plan of action, ſhall be as if it had not been done, or be attended with no conſequences which render the caſe hopeleſs. Thus Alexander, when he appeared before the walls of Thebes, demanded two perſons to be delivered up to him, *giving them repentance for what they had done*, διδους ετι των πεπραγμενων μετανοιαν, before he proceeded to extremities, Plutarch, Vol. IV. p. 18. l. 3. This Chriſt alſo does by his office of a Saviour, whoſe being veſted with this character puts it in every man's power to turn from his wickedneſs with advantage, and the opportunity of a full reſtitution to the bleſſedneſs which he has forfeited; the actual reſtitution to which by the power of Chriſt, at the laſt day, ſeems to be called very properly the *forgiveneſs of ſins*. Since then

death, according to the ſcriptures, is the puniſhment threatened to offenders, from which they are to be delivered by the miniſtry of the Meſſiah, whom God has raiſed up for this purpoſe; it is eaſy to ſee in what ſenſe the Apoſtle ſays, to thoſe who denied a reſurrection, that *if Chriſt be not raiſed, they are yet in their ſins.* And though this conſequence may appear to be equally deducible from the ſimple denial of a reſurrection, even if we ſhould grant that Chriſt is riſen; and muſt certainly hold good of the dead, who have all died in their ſins, if there be no hope of ſalvation for them; yet it is not without reaſon that he calls in this ſecond ſtep to the aid of his demonſtration, ſince by the help of it he concludes more certainly againſt thoſe who believed the reſurrection and exaltation of Chriſt, and perhaps his ſecond coming, whatever they might expect from that event, and ſhews that if they entertained any hopes from Chriſt in this life, they muſt be entirely vain and groundleſs; ſince if there was no ſuch thing as a reſurrection, Chriſt could not be riſen, and conſequently all advantages, preſent or future, the remiſſion of ſins in this world or in another, were alike impoſſible, or incapable of being effected, by his interpoſition and agency.

Ver. 19, 20. Theſe ſeem to be not particular inferences from what he ſays above, that Chriſt is not raiſed if there be no reſurrection, but more general concluſions from the Sadducean doctrine that the dead never riſe, and which are equally juſt upon a ſuppoſition that Chriſt is raiſed, and the goſpel true; in caſe, that a reſurrection from the dead be conſidered as no part of its promiſes. If there be no reſurrection or future life, it is very plain that the dead are loſt. But it is doubted in what ſenſe the Apoſtle muſt be taken, and of whom he ſpeaks, when he ſays, *If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all men moſt miſerable.* Let us then conſider what would be the caſe of thoſe, who embraced a true religion, in hope of ſome advantages preſent or future. If future, chriſtianity was a reaſonable ſcheme; and required nothing hard, or inconſiſtent with the welfare of any individual. But if preſent and only preſent, it was open to this glaring objection, that it required a moſt unequal ſacrifice, and laid men under the greateſt difficulties with regard to their temporal intereſt, without propoſing, to thoſe who ſhould be called out to ſuffer in this manner, any motive or encouragement to a compliance with its diſtinguiſhing command; a circumſtance which was unworthy of any teacher who pretended to be divine. A religion that is founded only upon temporal ſanctions, may gain abundance of converts, but will make few martyrs. It was much to the Apoſtle's purpoſe to inſiſt upon this; and the argument would be ſtrongly felt by thoſe who lived in an age, when the worſhip of one God was accounted a crime, and to confeſs the name of Jeſus, downright blaſphemy. It will be readily allowed, that the goſpel as a mere ſyſtem of morality would, in general, have greatly bettered the ſtate of individuals at preſent, and this the more, the more largely it ſpread, and the more conſcientiouſly it was obſerved by thoſe who embraced it. But as a divine religion, which laid men under obligations, by which, in the nature of things, they could not be bound without or before its promulgation; and of ſuch a particular kind too, requiring men to acknowledge their belief of it in the moſt hazardous circumſtances, to ſuffer patiently the loſs of all things, and even to die in its defence: as ſuch, I ſay, the caſe muſt be conſiderably altered. And we ſee that, in the event, it proved ruinous to great numbers, who ſuffered for their adherence to it both in their poſſeſſions

poſſeſſions and lives. But it can hardly be reconciled to our ideas of the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, that he ſhould publiſh a religion to the world by his own authority, and call upon men to profeſs it at the expence of their lives, without the hope of any future reward. Further it is to be remembered that God, or Chriſt in his name, had really made promiſes of ſome kind, to thoſe who embraced this religion: but if a reſurrection, and conſequently a future life, was an impoſſible thing, and an abſurd expectation (as theſe men ſeem to have argued) while Chriſtians died away without any interpoſition of providence in their favour, nay *were killed all the day long, and accounted as ſheep for the ſlaughter*, becauſe of their fidelity to God and his Meſſiah, they muſt neceſſarily conſider themſelves as deluded, forſaken of heaven, and given up to everlaſting deſtruction. Theſe particulars may help us to ſee the drift of the Apoſtle's argument, and account for the ſtrong expreſſion he makes uſe of, that they were *of all men moſt miſerable*, or moſt deſerving of compaſſion. Hated and perſecuted of men, forſaken of God, and juſt ready to periſh without hope; following thoſe who had lately gone before them to the land of darkneſs, and reaped in the grave the fruits of their mad perſeverance; how could they deplore their calamitous ſituation in terms leſs affecting? And though we ſhould allow that there is an exaggeration in the expreſſion, and that the preciſe quantity of diſtreſs which fell to their ſhare, when calculated with a mathematical nicety, has been equalled or even exceeded on certain occaſions; yet I believe the cuſtom of language in general, and the nature of the caſe referred to, will ſufficiently apologize for the ſtrength of expreſſion made uſe of. Nothing however can be leſs pertinent to the Apoſtle's argument, than a ſuppoſition that virtue and goodneſs are the immediate cauſes of human unhappineſs, or natural enemies to the repoſe and enjoyment of mankind. Nor on the other hand does it ſeem to me in the leaſt neceſſary for vindicating the expreſſion, to ſuppoſe, according to the opinion of ſeveral learned men, that he is ſpeaking only of himſelf and the other apoſtles; who, provided the goſpel was not true, were guilty of a moſt wicked and unprofitable deceit, which involved the contrivers of it in preſent evil, and future deſtruction, and therefore rendered them of all men moſt miſerable.

And though this interpretation furniſh us with a very juſt and natural ſentiment, yet it is barely a comment and explanation of the fifteenth verſe, and aſſerts nothing but what muſt neceſſarily have been anticipated by the reflection of every reader on peruſing the former argument: while it obliges us at the ſame time to diſplace another ſentiment, which I have endeavoured to ſhew is both natural and important. There is no abſurdity contained in the ſuppoſition, that the apoſtles were falſe witneſſes, any farther than as it is contrary to all the principles by which men are generally actuated, and as none can be ſuppoſed to commit wickedneſs merely with a view to make themſelves ſignally unhappy. And it muſt be obſerved alſo, that to *hope in God or in Chriſt*, according to the general ſenſe of ſuch phraſes in Scripture, is, to hope for favour, ſupport, or deliverance from their providence and agency; and therefore cannot well be applicable to impoſtors; who have no hope at all in them, or only expect to make ſome gain of a contrivance carried on in their names. He muſt, to ſay the leaſt, be ſpeaking of thoſe who *think* they have ſome ground to hope in Chriſt, though it be but in this life; and therefore believe that he is riſen

from

from the dead, and endued with power to confer upon them ſome ſort of happineſs, let it be ever ſo ſhort in its duration; and not of hypocrites and deceivers, who under the garb of religion, and a forged commiſſion from heaven, go about to delude the world; and lead men into a falſe and dangerous dependance.

Ver. 22. The phraſes ἐν Χριστῷ πάντες and ἐν Ἀδὰμ πάντες, which may be rendered *all in Chriſt* and *all in Adam*, ſeem to denote two claſſes; the one including the whole poſterity of Adam, who are naturally ſubject to death and corruption; the other all good men, who are heirs of the reſurrection and life to come. Thus οἱ ἐν Χριστῷ is with the Apoſtle a common name for the followers of Chriſt, and thoſe who have an intereſt in his favour. My reaſon for the above interpretation is, that the Apoſtle, as is evident from the whole ſcope of the chapter, and generally allowed by learned men, ſpeaks here only of the reſurrection of the juſt. For the order which he mentions in the following verſe, is no other than that of two parties, of Chriſt firſt and his followers afterward. Alſo 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 16. where he ſays, *The dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt*, he has not oppoſed the reſurrection of good men to the reſurrection of the wicked, but to the effect of divine power upon thoſe who remain alive, who will afterwards be changed, and be for ever with the Lord. And elſewhere he repreſents the reſurrection of the dead as the peculiar reward and expectation of the upright, *Phil.* iii. 11. From all which we may collect, that the Apoſtle conſiders a reſurrection, not barely as a reſtitution to life, but as an eſtabliſhment in a ſtate of glory and immortality, which is the lot only of good men.

Ver. 24. This paſſage has been very differently explained. Some have imagined that Chriſt will entirely ceaſe to be a king; becauſe he is ſaid to deliver up the kingdom, to rule *till* all things have been put under his feet, and *then* to be ſubject to the Father. Others again have thought, that all theſe expreſſions may be fairly accounted for, without ſuppoſing any ceſſation of that authority of which Chriſt is poſſeſſed by the appointment of his Father. Nor will this appear altogether without foundation, if we conſider, 1. That the Meſſiah reigns not by his own authority as ſupreme, but only as the Vicegerent of God, who hath exalted him to be Lord of all, and heir of univerſal empire, to the glory of the Father. And therefore he may very conſiſtently be ſaid to deliver the kingdom to God, as ſoon as he has ſubdued it by the divine power; even though he continue to hold it as Mediator, ſince this is not for himſelf, but for him of whom and to whom are all things, and in a full acknowledgement of the right of the Eternal Sovereign, which ſuffers not the leaſt diminution or alienation. This is very agreeable to the dying prayer of our Saviour, *Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son alſo may glorify thee*, John xvii. 1. that is, "O Benevolent Parent, advance now thy Son to that dignity which thou haſt "deſigned him, that, by the power which thou giveſt into his hands, he may "enlarge thy empire in the conqueſt of Sin and Death, and raiſe thy faithful "children to honour and immortality."

2. Chriſt does not deliver up a kingdom, which he has long enjoyed in the full extent of princely power, according to the original grant of the Supreme Being; but that which he has juſt conquered, and made his own by the extirpation or ſubmiſſion of his enemies. He is already a King or Lord by the appointment of his Father, who hath exalted him to be the Saviour and Prince of the human race; but he is not in the actual and full poſſeſſion of this kingdom,

dom, till all things are put under his feet, which will not take place before the reſurrection and final judgment. And then he will deliver the kingdom of this world to the Father, not by laying down his mediatorial authority, but by eſtabliſhing it in the fulleſt extent: becauſe he will take the government out of the hands of weak fallible princes, and ſet up a kingdom of righteouſneſs and glory, which ſhall endure for ever, under the Father as ſupreme, and under the Meſſiah as his Vicegerent. This time the Apoſtle calls το τελος, *the end*, as it is frequently called in the New Teſtament, which is not the end of the Meſſiah's adminiſtration, but the iſſue, effect, and accompliſhment of the divine promiſe made to him, that he ſhould be Lord of all. And therefore the Apoſtle explains what he ſays concerning Chriſt's delivering up the kingdom, by adding, *when he ſhall have put down all rule, dominion, and authority.* For Chriſt, by triumphing over the powers of the world, and ſubduing all things to himſelf, introduces that ſtate which is called the kingdom of God in the New Teſtament. And when he is raiſed to this height of glory and dignity, he will not, like the princes of this world, rule by maxims which diſhonour the Creator, and are inconſiſtent with the happineſs of his rational offſpring. For, notwithſtanding his exaltation, he will continue ſubject and obedient to the Father, managing the kingdom of which he is poſſeſſed, according to the will and for the glory of the Supreme Lord, ſo that *God ſhall be all in all.* And the only reaſon why Chriſt is ſaid to deliver the kingdom to God *then*, and not before, is becauſe he is not ſuppoſed to have the full poſſeſſion of it himſelf, till the time ſpoken of. Agreeably to which we find him repreſented, *Heb.* x. 13. *expecting henceforth till his enemies be made his footſtool*, or, till God fulfill the promiſe of giving the government into his hands. Otherwiſe, if it had been in his poſſeſſion before, it would undoubtedly have been delivered to the Father. For as the kingdom of God and of Chriſt is one and the ſame, ſo his delivering the kingdom to God, and having all things put under his own feet, are the very ſame thing. The kingdom of God is then eſtabliſhed, when all things are ſubject to the authority of the Meſſiah; and therefore it was indifferent to the Apoſtle to ſay either, When the Meſſiah ſhall poſſeſs the kingdom, or, When he ſhall deliver it to the Father. And thoſe expreſſions in Scripture, which ſpeak of *all things being given into the hands of Chriſt*, and *of principalities and powers being ſubject unto him*, are to be interpreted of the purpoſe and promiſe of God, rather than of the actual complete eſtabliſhment of the Meſſiah's authority.

3. Whoever examines the cxth pſalm, which the Apoſtle here quotes, will ſee that the ſenſe of the firſt verſe cannot be, Reign thou till I make thine enemies thy footſtool, and then ceaſe to be king. Since the perſon to whom this promiſe or command is given, is likewiſe ſaid to *rule in the midſt of his enemies*, and to be *a king for ever*. And the particles αχρις ου and εως ου in the Greek, and עד in the Hebrew, are uſed not barely to denote the preciſe limits aſſigned to the duration of the ſubject ſpoken of, but alſo the certainty of ſomething which is to take place, without any regard to the term of the others continuance, and even in caſes where it is abſurd to ſuppoſe, that the thing firſt ſpoken of ſhould ceaſe to be. Thus, Pſalm cxii. 8. *His heart is eſtabliſhed, he ſhall not be afraid, untill he ſee his deſire upon his enemies:* Iſaiah xlii. 4. *He ſhall not fail nor be diſcouraged, till he have ſet judgment in the earth.* Where it would be ridiculous to ſuppoſe, that the conqueſt of an enemy, or the completion of a valuable purpoſe,

purpoſe, ſhould be marked out for the period when a man's courage and reſolution ſhall juſt begin to fail him; ſince theſe are events more likely to raiſe, than depreſs, the moſt coward ſouls. So Romans v. 13. *Until the law ſin was in the world.* The preſent paſſage therefore muſt be underſtood thus: Sit thou on my right hand, and I will certainly make all thine enemies thy footſtool. And the promiſe which the Apoſtle ſuppoſes God to have made to the Meſſiah in theſe words, he elſewhere expreſſes without any ambiguity, *Heb.* i. 8. *But unto the Son he ſaith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*

4. If the Apoſtle affirms that Chriſt delivers up the kingdom, and then becomes ſubject to the Father, he ſays nothing. For we muſt believe that he was before ſubject to the Father, or he was not. If he was before and always ſubject to the Father, there is nothing new in his ſubjection afterward, nor is it at all increaſed by his being diveſted of kingly power. If he was not ſubject to the Father, while he held the mediatorial kingdom, it is not eaſy to ſee how his giving up this kingdom would reduce him to a ſtate of ſubjection. Not to ſay, that the very notion of ſuch an independence is inconſiſtent with thoſe paſſages of Scripture, which aſſert that the Meſſiah received all his power and authority from the Supreme Being. The intention of the Apoſtle here is evidently to aſſert the ſupreme, unrivalled majeſty of the Almighty Father. And it is natural to ſuppoſe that he would endeavour to improve upon his readers, and raiſe their ideas of the ſubject as much as poſſible. This he does by introducing the Son of God, in the higheſt circumſtances of honour and greatneſs, compleatly victorious over his enemies, and having all things under his feet—all things, except the Eternal Being by whoſe irreſiſtible might they were ſubdued to the obedience of his Meſſiah. When therefore all things ſubmit themſelves to the Son, and own his power and ſway, τοτε και, *even then*, and while he continues in this exalted ſtate, will he be ſubject to the Father. I acknowledge that the delivering up the kingdom, as it is uſually underſtood, would be an unqueſtionable proof of the Meſſiah's dependance and ſubjection. Yet there appears to me ſomething more grand, and better ſuited to expreſs the elevated ideas which the Apoſtle entertained of the divine greatneſs, in the other interpretation.

Ver. 29. There is hardly a paſſage in the whole New Teſtament, which has more exerciſed the genius of commentators, or given riſe to a greater variety of unſucceſsful conjectures, than this, *Elſe what ſhall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead riſe not at all?* And it ſeems almoſt as difficult to find out a new interpretation, as to acquieſce in the greater part of thoſe which have been ſtarted already. Therefore many have deſpaired of ſeeing it cleared up to ſatisfaction; and it was the opinion of one Critick, that we muſt wait for an explanation of it till Elias come. There is one interpretation which would ſuit the ſignification and conſtruction of the words, but ſuppoſes a practice too ſuperſtitious for this early period, as well as too ridiculous to be made the foundation of a ſerious argument. Other interpretations may have been more happy in point of ſentiment, but at the ſame time have wanted the authority of good writers, to ſupport the ſignification given to particular words. Others again, which have been more ſucceſsful in both theſe ways, yet have fallen ſhort of that weight and dignity which we might have expected, and which we meet with in the reſt of the diſcourſe; and ſeem to have been adopted rather through neceſſity, and for the ſake of giving ſome kind of ſenſe to the paſſage, than as ſetting

the Apoſtle's argument in a clear and ſatisfactory light. It would be both a tedious and unneceſſary taſk to enumerate theſe different interpretations, and give particular reaſons for rejecting them all. I will only mention two of the more remarkable, and which have been ſupported by men of eminence for critical learning. Voſſius and the late Dr. Ward ſuppoſe, that the paſſage may be explained by *Rom.* vi. 3, 4. and that the baptiſed for the dead are the ſame with the perſons there repreſented, as being baptiſed into the death of Chriſt, and buried with him by baptiſm into his death; and that υπερ νεκρων muſt be rendered *for dead* or *as dead*, alluding, according to the firſt of theſe Criticks, to the figurative death of Chriſtians, by which they die to ſin and riſe to holineſs; or, according to the latter, to the mode of baptiſm by immerſion, for which no reaſon can be aſſigned, unleſs thereby was expreſſed the hope of a reſurrection. I will not here examine the rendering of υπερ νεκρων, the propriety of which may reaſonably be diſputed; and only obſerve, that it may be very juſt to argue with Chriſtians from the nature of their baptiſm to the obligation and neceſſity of an holy life, and it may be alſo a peculiar beauty to expreſs this in metaphorical language, alluding to ſome circumſtances attending baptiſm; but it ſeems a mere play upon words, and carries too the air of a deſign upon the perſons to whom he is writing, to aim, by ſuch alluſive language, at exaggerating their ſuppoſed diſtreſs, and drawing a more deplorable picture of the ſituation to which they are reduced by the profeſſion of the goſpel, provided there be no reſurrection; as appears evidently to be the ſcope of the paſſage. For, if we ſtrip the ſentence of all figure, it would be no more than this, Elſe what ſhall they do, who, by being plunged under water, take upon them peculiar obligations to lead an holy and unblameable life, if the dead riſe not? which is uſing a number of words to expreſs juſt nothing. And how unworthy muſt it be of the Apoſtle, and unneceſſary beſides, to paint imaginary and metaphorical ſcenes of diſtreſs, when he had ſo many real ones before him? Others, among whom are Le Clerc and Sir Richard Ellis, ſuppoſe that the Apoſtle refers to ſuch as were daily entering into the Chriſtian church by baptiſm, and, like new raiſed levies for an exhauſted army, ſucceeded in the place of thoſe who had lately fallen in the cauſe of truth and goodneſs, and therefore are repreſented as being baptiſed *for* or *in the room of* the dead. There is a great deal of ingenuity in this interpretation, but it is liable to ſome of the ſame objections with the former, and ſuppoſes the Apoſtle too attentive to ornament, and forced alluſions, and reſting the ſtrength of his cauſe upon a trifling conceit. It is beſides a view of Chriſtian baptiſm that is ſtrained and unuſual; for it is always repreſented as a private perſonal affair, an engagement which every man enters into for himſelf, without any reſpect had, either in the perſon who adminiſters this ordinance, or him who ſubmits to it, to his filling up the place of another, or taking the office and rank of one that is departed. And though the compariſon be not altogether ſo unreaſonable but that it might be allowed on ſome occaſions, yet it ſeems to have little propriety here, and would agree better with the amplification of a rhetorical diſcourſe upon the ſubject of baptiſm, than to the direct, conciſe, and pointed reaſoning which is purſued through this chapter.

To offer my own ſentiments of the paſſage, if they may ſerve to clear up any part of the difficulty; I think that the Apoſtle does not ſuppoſe Chriſtians

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in general, or any particular perſons among them, to have been in reality baptiſed for the dead; whatever ſenſe we chuſe to put upon the phraſe; but is only drawing a conſequence from his adverſaries principles, and aſſerts here that Chriſtians are baptiſed for the dead, juſt as he had aſſerted, v. 15. that Chriſt is not raiſed, that is, upon ſuppoſition that there is no reſurrection. And I underſtand the queſtion in this manner—not, What ſhall they do, if the dead riſe not, who are baptiſed for the dead? but, What ſhall they do, who, if the dead riſe not, are baptiſed for the dead? We are then to enquire what is meant by being *baptiſed for the dead.* To do any thing for the dead, with a view to benefit ourſelves or others while under that ſtate, is a mark of extreme madneſs and ſtupidity, and can agree to none but ſuch as have loſt their ſenſes, and are entirely governed by ſuperſtition or phrenzy. It is for this reaſon that *ungere mortuos, mederi mortuis, to anoint the dead, to preſcribe for the dead,* and ſuch kind of phraſes, were made uſe of to expreſs labour loſt, and brand in a ſtrong manner any piece of fooliſh unneceſſary conduct; to which we might deſervedly add *praying for the dead,* if it were worth while to enlarge a collection already conſiderable. Something of this kind, perhaps, was intended by *being baptiſed for the dead*; words which admit of no reaſonable interpretation, upon a ſuppoſition that they convey the Apoſtle's only ſentiments of Chriſtian baptiſm, or even a declaration of what other Chriſtians ſignified or intended by this ceremony of initiation. And that ſo many learned and judicious criticks have been able to fix no rational ſenſe upon them in this view, is, I think, a ſufficient preſumption that the Apoſtle intended to expreſs *an abſurdity*—and one of the greateſt he could deviſe for the purpoſe. For what could be more happily thought of, to deſcribe the deſperate and hopeleſs ſituation of converts to Chriſtianity, upon the ſcheme he is confuting, than to conſider them as having all their views centered in the grave, and by their very baptiſmal engagements entering into alliance with, and recognizing their relation to, all who have gone down to the habitation of the dead?

Some have thought the expreſſion elliptical, and that we may ſupply αναστασεως between υπερ and νεκρων; as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, What ſhall they do who are baptiſed for a reſurrection of the dead, if the dead riſe not? But as no ſuch thing is expreſſed in the only forms of baptiſm that are left us in the New Teſtament, it is not likely that the Apoſtle ſhould juſt then beg the queſtion of his adverſaries, which he has all along avoided. And if we may fill up ſentences in this arbitrary manner, juſt as it ſuits the purpoſes of a Critick, without regard to the genius of a language, and the received rules of interpretation (which allow us only to ſupply words that are uſually omitted, immediately precede, or have been left out for the ſake of elegance and brevity, where they are of ſuch a nature as that the mind of every reader muſt ſuggeſt them, becauſe the ſenſe or conſtruction would be incomplete without an addition: nothing of which is the caſe here) the province of Criticiſm would be reduced to mere ſuppoſition and gueſs-work. And if I judge right, ſuch conjectures ſhould be propoſed as emendations of the text, or reſtorations of words careleſsly dropt by tranſcribers; and not as deſignedly omitted by the writers themſelves. For what author, that had any regard to perſpicuity, or deſigned to be underſtood by his readers, would ſay that men performed any action *for*, or *for the ſake of*, *the dead*, when he only meant that they did it *for*

the ſake of a reſurrection from the dead. We need not perhaps be very ſtudious to fix the preciſe and determinate idea which the Apoſtle had to the phraſe, *being baptiſed for the dead*; ſince, whether we conſider Chriſtians as being baptiſed for the dead in general, or their departed friends in particular, or only with a view to their own condition and ſettlement in the grave, their conduct muſt appear in the ſame abſurd and ridiculous light. Yet, as this comes after the aſſertion above, that Chriſtians were of all men the moſt worthy of compaſſion without the hope of another ſtate, it may be conſidered as a proof or illuſtration of ſuch an aſſertion. It is connected by the conjunction επει, a particle which, in the argumentative ſtile, is uſed when any one deſigns to confute an adverſary's principle by fixing upon them ſome abſurd conſequence, or eſtabliſh his own by ſhewing a neceſſary inconvenience that will attend the denial of them: and it may be rendered, *for in ſuch a caſe* or *otherwiſe*, according to the connection. Our tranſlators, by rendering it *elſe* according to the laſt ſignification, ſeem to have thought it connected with the clauſes immediately preceding. But it is more probable that the Apoſtle is confirming his former reaſoning, and here reſumes the chain, which he had dropt at the end of the nineteenth verſe; becauſe he continues it from this place, and proceeds to ſhew other abſurd conſequences that follow from the denial of a reſurrection. And whoever conſiders the interrupted ſtile of the Apoſtle, and how frequently he digreſſes from an argument, and returns to it without notice, will not be ſurprized to find it ſo here. If any ſhould ſtill happen to be of opinion, that the parts are too diſtant to be conſidered in this cloſe connection, I do not know any other ſignification that can be given to επει, except that very rare one we meet with now and then in Plutarch; who, as the grammarians have taken notice, uſes it ſometimes for αλλα, *but*. Upon the whole, I imagine the writer to have had this thought; "It is evident that we embrace Chriſtianity with no worldly views. For our "religion gives us no proſpect of what men call honour, power, riches, or "pleaſures; on the contrary, we become ſubject to endleſs troubles and in- "dignities, are reviled and perſecuted by all the world, and are under obliga- "tions to part with every thing, and life itſelf, rather than give up the truth, "or deny the name of Jeſus.——You ſay further that there is no reſurrection, "nor future recompence. It remains, then, that the men who look for no- "thing in this life, nor in a life to come, muſt have their whole attention turned "to the grave, and expect ſome honours and advantages in that ſilent abode; "for which they are ſo willing to reſign the momentary bleſſings of life, that "they may ſecure an intereſt with death, and enjoy undiſturbed repoſe and "tranquillity there." He ſuppoſes them to court that ſtate, from which all men beſides are eager to flee; and concerning which the Pſalmiſt ſays, *In death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who ſhall give thee thanks?* vi. 5. *Shall the duſt praiſe thee? ſhall it declare thy truth?* xxx. 9. *Wilt thou ſhew wonders to the dead? ſhall the dead ariſe and praiſe thee? ſhall thy loving kindneſs be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulneſs in deſtruction? ſhall thy wonders be known in the dark, and thy righteouſneſs in the land of forgetfulneſs?* lxxxviii. 10, 11, 12. *The dead praiſe not the Lord, neither any that go down into ſilence*, cxv. 17. I think it can hardly be doubted, but that his deſign was to contraſt the ſublime expectation of Chriſtians, with that deplorable ſtate, in which this new doctrine repreſents them. They had been baptized *in the name of the Father*, the fountain

tain of mercy, the author and preserver of their being, and the giver of every good and perfect gift, *in the name of his Son Christ Jesus*, the first begotten from the dead, and their constituted deliverer and Prince; *in the name of the Holy Spirit*, which came down from the Father, was an earnest of his favour, and a pledge of their promised inheritance. But if they were still in a state of condemnation, and under the sentence of everlasting death, all their glorious prospects were vanished; they had gained nothing by embracing the gospel, and their religion was stript of its best support: and as to the external enjoyments of mortal life (such was the corrupt state, and iniquitous conduct of the world) they were in a worse condition than many of the impious, the unjust, and debauched; whose crimes often proved their protection, and paved the way to greatness; and whose indifference to all religion, and compliance with the most corrupt and detestable worship, secured them from the animadversion of oppressive laws, and insults of a superstitious multitude.

The phrase τι ποιησουσιν is sometimes equivalent to τι οφελος, and may be rendered, What will they be bettered, or advantaged. Παραστας λιθον λοιδορει τι ποιησεις; αν ουν τις ως λιθος ακουη, τι οφελος τω λοιδορουντι; "If you stand by "a stone, and rail at it plentifully, what would you get by such an action? "If therefore you accustom yourself to hear ill-language, with as little emotion "as a stone, what advantage can another man have over you by an abusive tongue." *Epictetus ab Arriano*, p. 131. Ed. Upton. But it is the sentiment of Alberti, that these words denote *distress and danger*, a state of *deep affliction and misery*. Thus, he says, that Οιμοι τι δρασω; *Alas! what shall I do?* is an exclamation of distress very common in ancient tragedy, and expresses the grief and anxiety of mind to which persons are reduced by unexpected calamities, or such as they see no way to be delivered from. And though he does not quote any authorities from tragic or other writers, to shew that τι ποιησω is used by the Greeks, as *Quid faciem? Perii* by the Latins, yet perhaps the following uses of the phrase will be sufficient to confirm his opinion. Ουκ εχων οτι ποιησει and αμηχανων οτι ποιησει signify *quite at a loss what to do, in the utmost distress how to act*, Xenophontis Ephes. p. 75 & 78. Ον τι οιεσθε ποιησειν κ. τ. λ. *To what a dismal situation do you think he will be reduced, &c.* Plutarch in Phocion, V. 4. p. 184. l. ult. So *Job* xxxi. 14. τι γαρ ποιησω κ. τ. λ. *What shall I do*, or what will become of me, *when God riseth up?* We may therefore translate the whole passage in its connection thus, "If we have hope in Christ only in this "life, we really deserve pity beyond any men in the world. For what can "be more wretched than their situation, who have only been baptised for the "dead, if the dead never rise?"

Ver. 30. St. Paul, from considering Christians in general and the folly of their conduct universally, in embracing the gospel provided there was no resurrection and future life, comes now to consider himself and the other Apostles. And as he had before asserted concerning all Christians, that they were baptised for the dead (a most unnatural and ridiculous supposition) if there was no state after this, and asked, Why are they baptised for the dead? or, Why are they baptised? Is it for the dead?——So we may suppose him asking here, with respect to himself and other preachers of the gospel, Whether they too exposed themselves to danger every hour *for the dead*, and with a view to that *envied* state?

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Ver. 31. Some manuſcripts read ημετεραν *our or my rejoicing*, which makes much the ſame ſenſe. For the preſent reading, which is ſupported by the greateſt number of copies, muſt be rendered *the rejoicing which I have on your account*, as the words will very well bear, and the ſenſe of the paſſage neceſſarily requires. And it differs from the other reading only in this reſpect, that it ſuppoſes the Apoſtle to ſpecify ſomething more, and conſiders the Corinthians as one great occaſion of his hope and joy, as he elſewhere conſiders his other converts, 1 *Theſſ.* ii. 19, 20. The Apoſtle's ſolemn proteſtation in this place by his hope in Chriſt, as being ſomething real and indiſputable, which were the very ſubject of debate between him and his opponents, appears a maſterly ſtroke of natural eloquence, and has been compared by ſome criticks with the ſo much applauded paſſage of the Grecian orator, Νη τους τεθνεωτας εν Μαραθωνι, I ſwear by thoſe noble ſouls who died in Marathon.——The phraſe of *dying daily*, to ſignify *continual peril, the being always expoſed to death*, and *having it as it were before the eyes every moment*, though ſomewhat unuſual, is not without example. Kypke quotes a paſſage from Philo, where Flaccus ſays, καθ' εκαστην ημεραν, μαλλον δ' ως ωραν προαποθνησκω. *I already die every day, or rather every hour.* Thus it is ſaid of the boy, who was left behind in the ſaint's tomb, and according to the legend miraculouſly preſerved by him during a whole year, Ουκ αρτι θανη, αλλα ενιαυσιον, η μαλλον ειπειν καθ' εκαστην στιγμην και ταυτης τω λεπτοτατω αποθνησκοντα παιδα διεσωξεν. "He was raiſed, not juſt "after death, but a whole year after, or to ſpeak more properly, he died and "was raiſed during every moment of this diſtreſſing interval." *De Miracule Clementis ap. Pat.* Ap. V. 1. p. 819. l. 9. Ed. Clerici.

Ver. 32. It is far from being agreed, whether the Apoſtle ſpeaks of a combat with real beaſts, or only with men as fierce and untractable as the moſt ſavage monſters of the wood. There are difficulties attending both interpretations, which a critick can only compare together, and chuſe that as the more probable opinion, which is attended with the feweſt. The ſilence of the ſacred hiſtorian, and of almoſt all antiquity, concerning ſo remarkable an event, together with its being omitted by St. Paul in the enumeration of his ſufferings, 2 Cor. xi. 25. (many of which ſeem much inferior to this, if literal) favour the figurative ſenſe of the paſſage. It is further alledged that St. Paul, being a Roman citizen, would undoubtedly, as on other occaſions, have pleaded this privilege, to exempt him from ſo great an indignity, as well as danger, and from which he could hardly have eſcaped without a miracle. It is alſo inſiſted upon that we hear of no amphitheatre at Epheſus, which was the uſual place for ſuch barbarous entertainments: and that it is a moſt unlikely thing that the governor or the people of the province ſhould ſentence a Roman citizen to fight with wild beaſts. Inſtances beſides are quoted from ſacred and profane writers, where ignorant or wicked men are compared to beaſts, to defend the Apoſtle in the uſe of this figure.

To all which it is anſwered, that the bare omiſſion of any particular facts by an hiſtorian, is no proof that they never happened; and with reſpect to the ſacred hiſtorians can hardly be allowed to be ſo much as a preſumption againſt their reality, provided there be ſuch evidence from any other quarter as might induce us to credit them. For it is very reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that ſeveral particulars, equally extraordinary in their nature with thoſe which are recorded, have been purpoſely paſt

over by writers, who drew up their accounts with a ſtudied conciſeneſs, abridged their matter as much as poſſible; and crowded narrations into the ſpace of a few ſheets, which a more diffuſe hiſtorian might have drawn out into almoſt as many volumes. And the enumeration, which St. Paul makes of his ſufferings, 2 Cor. xi. is not a complete catalogue of every thing which he had undergone, but a general mention of his diſtreſſes both in cities and ſolitudes, by land and by ſea, from falſe friends or open enemies, together with a particular detail of ſome few, which does not oblige us to exclude others, even if more remarkable, out of the number, merely becauſe they are not mentioned by name. It is certain alſo that the Apoſtle did ſometimes ſuffer indignities from the Roman governors, as the being beaten with rods contrary to their law; three inſtances of which he records himſelf in the above enumeration: from whence we may collect, that he did not always plead his privilege of being a Roman citizen, or that it did not avail him. And we are ſo entirely ignorant of the occaſion and circumſtances of this combat, if real, that it is impoſſible for us to determine how or where it happened; or whether it was in conſequence of a judicial ſentence obtained from a corrupt or cruel magiſtrate, or only brought on by the fury of a licentious mob, whoſe paſſions when raiſed defy the reſtraints of law and decorum, and whoſe actions are too eccentric to be reduced to any principles, on which to ground our reaſoning in this matter. But it is very probable that there had been ſeveral abuſes of this kind, ſince in the year of Chriſt 58, which according to chronologers was the year after this epiſtle was written, the Emperors publiſhed an edict, forbidding magiſtrates and procurators of provinces to exhibit any ſhew of gladiators, wild beaſts, &c. Tacitus. Annal. 13. §. 31. "By which, as the hiſtorian informs us, they had hereto-"fore as much oppreſſed the ſubject, as by their extortions. Since they com-"pounded by a ſpecies of corruption, for thoſe exceſſes to which they had been "driven by their avarice or cruelty." Theſe things being conſidered, it will not appear at all unlikely that a Roman governor ſhould forward or connive at ſuch an act of injuſtice, to oblige thoſe perſons whom he had ſo much reaſon to fear. We are as little able to ſay, in what manner the Apoſtle eſcaped, whether by miracle or in a natural way. Nor is it at all ſtrange that a fact, which is but juſt hinted at, ſhould lie open to theſe objections; ſince many ſtories would appear confuſed and unaccountable, though related more at large, were a very few circumſtances omitted in the narration. And whereas ſome have ſuppoſed that the Apoſtle refers to the diſturbance in the theatre, mentioned Acts xix. it is objected to this, that neither the danger to which he was expoſed in that tumult, nor any other oppoſition he is recorded to have met with during his ſtay in Epheſus, ſeem in any reſpect equal to ſuch a pompous figure. For in the diſturbance fomented by Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen, the immediate danger fell upon Ariſtarchus and Gaius, the Apoſtles companions, who were hurried into the theatre by the furious mob. Whereas, he was withheld by the prudent advice of his friends, from expoſing his perſon to the rage of an incenſed populace: which, had he actually done it, would have better juſtified ſo bold a metaphor. Not to ſay that chronologers place the tumult we are ſpeaking of, later than the writing of this firſt epiſtle.

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As to the cuſtom of ſpeaking or writing, if the queſtion muſt turn upon that, I believe it muſt be given clearly againſt the figurative interpretation of the paſſage. For there has not been an inſtance produced, from any writer ancient or modern, where the word is uſed in a metaphorical ſenſe abſolutely, and without any thing in the ſentence or connexion to reſtrain it to ſuch a ſignification. There is but one paſſage quoted where it is uſed at all in a metaphorical ſenſe: and there the metaphor ariſes ſo naturally from the ſubject which is treated, that it evidently appears to be the particular play of the writer indulging his own genius, rather than a received acceptation of the term. And it is beſides ſo fully explained, as to leave no doubt whether he ſpeaks properly or in a figure. The paſſage I refer to is in St. Ignatius's epiſtle to the Romans, where after ſpeaking largely concerning his expectation and deſire of being expoſed to wild beaſts in their city, he adds, "I fight with wild beaſts "all the way from Syria to Rome, being chained to ten leopards, that is, a file "of ſoldiers." I do not object to the propriety of the figure: nor is the queſtion concerning the propriety, but the uſe of it; and the uſe of it abſolutely and without any reſtriction or explanation. Men may take great latitude in the uſe of figures, and as the imagination is boundleſs, we are perpetually finding out and adopting new reſemblances, to give ſtrength and beauty to our diſcourſe. But he who employs one that was before unnoticed, generally gives ſome information of it, in words, or places it in ſuch a connection as to take away all ambiguity, and deliver the mind from that ſuſpenſe, in which it would otherwiſe have been left, between the literal and ſpiritual ſignification, unleſs it be his deſign to ſpeak in riddles, for the ſake of concealing his meaning, or exerciſing the invention of mankind in a multitude of ingenious conjectures. Nor have we any way to come at the meaning of a writer or ſpeaker who deals in figures, but from his own information or the connection of his diſcourſe, till cuſtom has rendered them familiar. I muſt here except ſuch figures as imply an evident abſurdity in the literal acceptation, which though the ſtrongeſt of any that are uſed, are for the reaſon above-mentioned the leaſt dubious, and may therefore be indulged to the moſt clear and accurate compoſers. Thus when the Apoſtle ſays in this very chapter that he *dies daily*, we are under no ſort of difficulty how he ſhould be underſtood; and never think of recurring to a ſenſe, that implies a direct contradiction. But the caſe is different when he ſpeaks of fighting with wild beaſts; becauſe the inhuman cuſtom of thoſe ages is too well known, to make it neceſſary that we ſhould have recourſe to figures for explaining a paſſage, which may ſo far without inconvenience be underſtood according to the letter. And though it be very uſual for men to be compared to particular animals, and called by their names; yet this is ſtill done with ſome caution, otherwiſe we ſhould be liable to continual miſtakes, and at a loſs to diſtinguiſh hiſtory from fable. Nor would ſuch an uſe of figures at all ſuit the grave and ſerious writer, but only thoſe authors who compoſe every thing for ſurprize and entertainment.

In order to obviate this difficulty ſome critics have propoſed to read κατ' ἀνθρωπων in the genitive caſe plural, and render it, "If I have fought againſt "men, as with wild beaſts." But this correction is without authority from the manuſcripts, and ſuppoſes the very point in queſtion, namely, that the Apoſtle did not really fight with wild beaſts. Others after κατ'ἀνθρωπον ſupply

λεγω,

λεγω, and render it *ſpeaking humanly* or *after the manner of men*. But how will it be proved that *ſpeaking humanly* or *after the manner of men*, is the ſame with ſpeaking *figuratively*, eſpecially when the figure made uſe of is almoſt without example? He could have ſaid no more, if the phraſe had been of daily uſe, and in every body's mouth. And can it be ſhewn that the Apoſtle, or any other writer, ever prefaced a figure of ſpeech with ſuch an aukward apology? Perhaps it is of ſome little weight in the argument, that a particular place is ſpecified; which renders it probable that the danger was ſomething ſingular, and had not befallen him any where elſe. But what part of the world was there in which he did not run in danger of his life, from the oppoſition and malice of wicked men, who were bent upon his deſtruction? And had he been ſpeaking figuratively, would he not rather have ſaid, "If I have ſo often or "almoſt continually been fighting with wild beaſts?" which would alſo have rendered his meaning more clear and certain. Becauſe the nearer any paſſage approaches to an abſurdity or improbability in the literal ſenſe, ſo much the more evident it is that the writer intended to ſpeak in a figure. It cannot be ſaid but by conjecture, that the danger to which he was expoſed at Epheſus, was ſo much greater than that which he ran at any other place, as to intitle it to a particular mention. For we know as little of that, as of his fighting with wild beaſts; and the circumſtances of both muſt be gueſſed at, unleſs we had further light from hiſtory to determine us. Upon the whole, if the Apoſtle muſt be ſuppoſed to ſpeak here in a figure, it is ſuch a figure as is harſh and ſingular, and, which is hardly excuſable in any writer, almoſt unavoidably liable to miſconſtruction. And the beſt that can be ſaid for his uſe of it is, that he wrote to perſons who might be ſuppoſed well acquainted with what befel him in thoſe parts, and therefore would want no other explanation.

The beſt interpretation of κατ' ανθρωπον or *according to man*, ſeems to be *that which is like the reſt of the world*, or *agreeable to the common apprehenſions and conduct of human beings*. The phraſe denotes any thing that is ſuitable to the general ſentiment and behaviour of ſuch creatures as men, or their uſual qualities of perſon or mind. Thus ουκ εστι μειζων η κατ' ανθρωπον, a form of expreſſion ſo common in Greek writers, ſignifies *an appearance greater or more auguſt than is made by men*. Thus Plato in his Philebus, as quoted by the Emperor Julian, ſays, "My "reverence for the names of the Deities, is not like that of the generality of "mankind, ουκ εστι κατ' ανθρωπον, but goes beyond their ſtrongeſt feelings." *Orat.* VII. p. 439. l. 19. Ed. Paris. Plutarch alſo quotes a paſſage from the Stoic writers, as follows, "Wherefore on account of the exceeding great ex-"cellence and beauty of which we ſpeak, we appear to talk extravagantly, "and not of things which agree to man and his nature," και ου κατ' ανθρωπον και ανθρωπινην φυσιν. Upon which he thus comments, "Can any writer more "flatly contradict himſelf than this, who pretends that thoſe things agree to "human life, and the natural ſentiments of mankind, which he owns on "account of their extravagannce appear fictitious and far above the nature and "circumſtances of men," και υπερ τον ανθρωπον και υπερ την ανθρωπινην φυσιν. *Plutarch, de repugnantiis Stoicorum, Op. Mor.* p. 464. l. 15. Ed. 1764. Now the general behaviour of men ſhews, that they are actuated by the love of preſent pleaſure, gain, or applauſe. Therefore the Apoſtle ſays, "If with theſe "views I fought with wild beaſts at Epheſus, what am I advantaged." And the

next words, "If the dead riſe not" will be more conveniently referred to the beginning of the following ſentence. The Apoſtle uſes the phraſe κατ' ανθρωπον in the ſame manner elſewhere. Thus 1 Cor. iii. 3. *Are ye not carnal and walk as men*, κατ' ανθρωπον, or behave no better than the reſt of the world. Whereas the goſpel teaches us to go beyond the uſual practice of men, and excel them in patience, charity, and every virtue.

Let us eat and drink, &c.] This has for the moſt part been conſidered as a general maxim, and borrowed from the ſyſtem of Epicurus; meaning, "If "there be no future exiſtence, let us live in all vicious indulgences, and in the "neglect of every thing ſerious, for to-morrow we ſhall die, and there will be "an end of us for ever." I cannot ſubſcribe to the former part of this aſſertion; and I am further inclined to think, that the Apoſtle is as much indebted for his ſentiment to the Jewiſh, as to the heathen ſchools. If the paſſage be conſidered as a bare quotation, we can hardly doubt that it was taken from Iſaiah xxii. 13. becauſe it is more probable that the Apoſtle ſhould read and quote the writings of his own nation, than thoſe of heathen philoſophers or poets. And though the exhortation is not applied to a very good purpoſe by thoſe who are ſaid to make uſe of it in the prophet, I do not think that this will decide the ſenſe of it here. For St. Paul frequently accommodates the words of the Old Teſtament to his own deſign, and makes uſe of them to convey his preſent meaning, without a ſcrupulous regard to their application in the writer from whom he borrows. I ſee no ſufficient reaſon to ſuppoſe that the reſolution expreſſed in theſe terms implies any thing light or immoral, or gives up the cauſe to the votaries of criminal pleaſure, even upon a ſuppoſition that the preſent ſtate is final. And I believe that St. Paul ſpeaks only with reference to himſelf and the other preachers of the goſpel. He aſks, "Why ſtand we in jeopardy every hour? Why do we expoſe ourſelves to "danger, perſecution, and the extremity of wretchedneſs in the cauſe of "Chriſt, if our hopes end with life, and if that reſurrection which, accord-"ing to our preaching, is to be effected by him, be a vain and groundleſs expec-"tation? Surely it is madneſs in us, to be volunteers in the cauſe of falſe-"hood and miſery, and to be thus prodigal of our all without any hope of "recompenſe. To what purpoſe theſe wearifome and perilous journeys, and "the long circle of fruitleſs toils? Let us return home and enjoy the little "which we have in peace, for the ſhort term that providence permits us to "live." This is the very maxim or inference which Solomon eſtabliſhes, after the picture which he has drawn of his own and other mens unprofitable labours. *For what hath man of all his labours, and of the vexation of his heart wherein he hath laboured under the ſun? There is nothing better for a man, than that he ſhould eat and drink, and that he ſhould make his ſoul enjoy good in his labour. This alſo I ſaw, that it was from the hand of God.* Eccleſiaſtes ii. 22, 24. It is natural for the human mind, to prize its own eaſe and enjoyment, and not to give up the innocent gratifications of life, without the proſpect of ſome equivalent. Thus it is very applicable to the caſe of the Apoſtles, and firſt preachers of the goſpel, who would never have engaged in ſuch an hazardous employment, except upon good aſſurance that their labours were not to be in vain. There is every reaſon to hold the maxim in this reſtrained ſenſe, but none at all to aply it at large. Nor is it a concluſion which any wiſe man would

would draw, that if there be no reſurrection, we ſhould reſign ourſelves to the exceſſes of pleaſure and univerſal diſſipation. Men, who have no ideas of duty or future recompenſe, might practice particular virtues and great inſtances of ſelf-denial, for their health, reputation, convenience, or even for the pleaſure which they took in them. But no man in his ſenſes would have undertaken to preach the goſpel (provided he knew or ſuſpected it to be falſe) though he had been ever ſo weary of his life, as long as there was a lake or a precipice at hand, or any other means left in the world to finiſh an unhappy being.

Ver. 34. ἐκνήψατε δικαίως is improperly tranſlated *awake to righteouſneſs*. Δικαίως is an adverb, and ſignifies *as it is right*, or *as it becomes you*. To two authorities quoted by Alberti, we may add one from Ocellus Lucanus.——— Ὁ δὲ παρεγερθεὶς δικαίως, *but the man who ſtands up for his own authority as he ought to do*. Apud Gale, p. 533. l. 20. Ed. 1688. Alſo μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε in this place muſt ſignify, *Do not err*, rather than *Sin not*.

Ver. 35. That theſe queſtions which the Apoſtle ſuppoſes would be put to him, were not for the ſake of information, but contain at leaſt a part of his adverſary's objections againſt the doctrine of a reſurrection, is probable from the manner in which he replies. If we take them for mere enquiries of curioſity, *πως how* ought to refer either to the manner in which the dead will be raiſed, or the means by which ſuch an event would be effected: and *ποιῳ σωματι what* to the kind or quality of the bodies which they would receive. But to the firſt of theſe queſtions, thus underſtood, he makes no direct reply. His anſwer turns entirely upon the poſſibility of ſuch an event, which he attempts to illuſtrate by ſomething ſimilar to it in the works of nature, and this in ſuch a manner, as muſt incline one to believe that the contrary to this, the impoſſibility of a reſurrection, was implied in the queſtion. For it is not uſual with the Apoſtle to ſtart a difficulty, and leave it quite unanſwered. And perhaps he uſes the very words of their new teacher, who in his harangues to the Corinthians might ſay, "How is it that the dead are to be raiſed? and what power is equal to the "accompliſhment of ſuch an effect? Beſides, what kind of bodies muſt we "aſſign to thoſe, who are ſuppoſed to come forth from the graves? Will "their putrified, mouldered carcaſes be fit for uſe, a convenient receptacle "of a ſecond life, or capable of farther ſenſe and action?" By which kind of arguments it is probable that he endeavoured to explode the Chriſtian doctrine, and make way for an opinion that it was impoſſible for God himſelf to raiſe the dead. Had the Apoſtle been aſked barely concerning the manner of raiſing the dead to life, we might have expected that he would have owned himſelf ignorant, or have given ſome direct reply: or had he been conſulted about the means, by which it was to be accompliſhed, that he would have reſolved it immediately into the power received by Chriſt from the Father, *that mighty power by which he is able to ſubdue all things to himſelf*. But being attacked by Queriſts, who would not allow the poſſibility of this extraordinary fact, and aſked in a ſneering manner, How is it that the dead can be raiſed? and where will they find bodies? (which appears to be the drift of their enquiries) he very properly has recourſe to a different method. And he calls upon them to conſider the annual revival, or, as we might call it, the reſurrection of nature, effected by the providence and agency of the great Creator, as furniſhing a reaſonable ſolution of their difficulty.

In order to ſee the propriety of an argument of this kind, we muſt conſider that he does not intend to demonſtrate the truth of a reſurrection, but only to illuſtrate the poſſibility of it. For this purpoſe, inſtead of entering into a long and laboured proof of the divine omnipotence, he appeals, and perhaps with greater ſucceſs, to the univerſal obſervation of mankind, and their experience of an effect, which if it were not ſo common, would aſtoniſh them no leſs than ſeeing the dead ſtep out of their graves. And I believe it will be allowed by all, that to reaſon from one effect of the divine power to the poſſibility of another, is very fair and concluſive. Thus the argument finally reſts, where it ought, upon the power of that Almighty Being, who produces the common bleſſings of life by laws which he has at firſt inſtituted; but acts as much in producing the ſtated effects of nature as thoſe which require an extraordinary and miraculous interpoſition, and according to a poet of our own,

Spreads through all ſpace, extends through all extent,
Pervades unſeen, and operates unſpent.

The Apoſtle has been condemned for ſaying that the ſeed ſown in the ground *dies*; a remark which, at moſt, concerns only the mode of expreſſion, and not the argument itſelf, which remains in full ſtrength either way. But though the germen or bud ſprouts forth and lives, yet certainly the matter in which it is wrapt decays and corrupts. For, to borrow the words of an antient writer (if it be needful to quote a teſtimony to a fact ſo commonly known) "the wheat in the ground does not continue dry, and without putrefaction, "(σαπρὸς) but diſſolves and turns to a milky ſubſtance as ſoon as it begins to "vegetate." Plutarch, compariſon of the ſagacity of land and water animals, Op. Mor. p. 478. l. 7. from the bottom. What this writer calls the corruption and diſſolution, the Apoſtle by a natural figure calls the death of the ſeed; ſince the effects which are common to dead bodies, and ſeed ſown, give a ſufficient ground for the reſemblance. There would have been ſome force in the remark, if the Apoſtle had ſuppoſed that the reſurrection of man, like that of plants, was to be effected by any proceſs of vegetation. But as nothing could be further from his thoughts, he may be indulged a compariſon by which he illuſtrates at once the power and benevolence of the Creator.

The Apoſtle purſues his illuſtration, in order to obviate the next difficulty, *with what bodies the dead ſhould riſe*, and ſhews from it that his opponents had very limited notions both of the power and wiſdom of the Author of nature. They ſeem to have imagined, that if men were reſtored to life, they muſt receive bodies, the ſame both for matter and form as their preſent; and that for this reaſon the idea of a reſurrection was abſurd, and confuted itſelf: for their form being altogether changed, and the matter of which they were compoſed having undergone a thouſand revolutions, and become the parts of ſo many other bodies, it was quite incredible that they ſhould be collected together again, or, when collected, that they ſhould be capable of life and action. This point has been largely handled by ſome divines, who have taken pains to ſhew that there is nothing abſurd in the hypotheſis, that every man at the reſurrection ſhall receive the ſame individual body which he now animates, without either defect or redundance, notwithſtanding the variety of changes through which it will have paſt. I have no inclination to diſpute the point with them here, but will

will only obſerve, that the Apoſtle either was not aware of ſuch refinements, or, if he was, ſeems to have paid very little regard to them. He ſpeaks of no act of the divine power, to collect the ſcattered particles of matter, which compoſed the bodies of men, and reſtore them to their original place and office. If he had any idea of ſuch diſquiſitions, he muſt undoubtedly have conſidered them as vain and impertinent, ſince, paſſing them over entirely, he proceeds to ſhew, from the variety and excellence ſo viſible in the diſpoſition of nature, that the author of it is never at a loſs, either for materials upon which to work, or for means to accompliſh his deſigns. If his opponents thought that, when men were raiſed to life, the ſame individual maſs, of which their bodies are now formed, muſt be collected together, and receive the ſame figure which they have at preſent, and that without one or both of theſe there could be no ſuch thing as a reſurrection: he anſwers, that the ſeed which, when thrown into the ground corrupts and dies, riſes again with a body different both in matter and configuration, and ſuited to the new ſtate in which it appears. And, abſtracting from what is natural and ordinary in this phænomenon, and reſolving it, as we ought, into the ſkill and agency of the Creator, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that the ſame being, whoſe wiſdom and power are never limited in any of their operations, is able, when he raiſes up mankind, to furniſh them with bodies of ſuch materials and of ſuch a conſiſtence, as ſhall be perfectly adapted to the ſtate in which they will appear and act. He next conſiders the endleſs multiplicity of bodies both in earth and heaven, which, though ſo widely different in their nature and form, are all of them equally well adapted to the ends of their creation, and abundantly proclaim the power and contrivance of their Maker. An obſervation which greatly confirms the above-made inference, and ſhews alſo the inutility of thoſe enquiries into the ſubject which proceed upon leſs enlarged views of the divine perfection and operations.

One cannot tolerably account for the introduction of this illuſtration, or ſhew the uſe that is to be made of it, upon a ſuppoſition that the Apoſtle intended to ſupport the opinion of a reſurrection of the ſame body, as this doctrine is generally maintained. In truth, what occaſion to ranſack all nature for examples of different bodies, only for the ſake of ſhewing that the ſame bodies will be raiſed? It may be ſaid that all the bodies in the univerſe are compoſed of one kind of matter, but differ from each other in power and figure. So that, agreeable to theſe inſtances, the ſame bodies may riſe again, though greatly altered for the better, and fitted by the divine power for a more exalted ſtate. But even then the utmoſt that could be aſſerted with any degree of probability is, that the Apoſtle's arguments do not conclude againſt a reſurrection of the ſame particles which compoſe our preſent bodies. This doctrine can never be made out from the Apoſtle's reaſoning, becauſe it will always be improbable that he ſhould uſe ſuch proofs, as we have been ſpeaking of, in a point of this nature. And further, allowing this to have been the Apoſtle's meaning then, where he aſſerts with reſpect to ſeed, that the σωμα το γινησομενον, or future body, is not the ſame with that which was ſown, he muſt have been rather unhappy in the choice of a compariſon which makes way for an opinion the direct contrary to that which he laboured to eſtabliſh. For, if we complete the parallel, it will be this: "The body buried in the earth is not the ſame with that which riſes, "but God gives to every man, who attains to the reſurrection of the dead, "ſuch

" ſuch a body as pleaſeth him, or as is ſuited to the ſtate upon which he enters." And, what is more ſtrange upon this ſtate of the argument, he affirms that fleſh and blood, the materials of which our preſent frail ſyſtem is compoſed, cannot inherit the kingdom of God; and that though all good men will not die, yet they who are alive at the coming of Chriſt muſt be changed, and receive, by the power of God, ſuch bodies as befit the more durable and glorious ſtate upon which they enter.

I do not apprehend that the debate, concerning the reſurrection of the ſame body, is of much importance to us either as Divines or Philoſophers: and, ſetting aſide the information we receive from Scripture on this head, we might allow, without much difficulty, that part of the ſame matter of which our preſent bodies are made may poſſibly, and for any thing we know to the contrary, be employed in the formation of thoſe bodies we receive at the reſurrection. And the queſtion would then be reduced to this point, which is not the moſt intereſting that can be imagined, namely, " whether our houſes from " heaven, as the Apoſtle calls them, will be entirely new both for matter and " form, or fitted up in part out of the old materials."

Ver. 37. ει τυχοι, ſignifies *for inſtance: προς αλλο δ', ει ουτω τυχοι, αηδονα, and a nightingale, for inſtance, to another end.* Epictetus ab Arriano, p. 346. l. 3. Ατρειδην, ει τυχοι, Αγαμεμνονα. *Agamemnon, for inſtance, is called Atrides.* Heraclides ap. Gall. p. 470. l. 11. Ισχυι μεν, ει τυχοι, Μιλων. *Milo, for inſtance, in ſtrength.* Hieroclis fragmenta, p. 258. l. 7.

Ver. 38. το ιδιον σωμα ſhould be rendered *its peculiar or ſuitable body*; as *its own body* is ambiguous, and gives an idea which does not appear to have been deſigned by the writer.

Καθως ηθελησε] In the ſame manner Epictetus ſpeaks of the Creator, την κομην δε αφες τω πλασαντι ως αυτος ηθελησεν, *Leave your hair to him, who formed it as it hath pleaſed him.* Ep. ab Arriano, p. 352. l. 14.

Ver. 41. Theſe examples, as was obſerved, are employed to make it probable, from the variety there is in the works of nature, and the wiſdom with which every thing is fitted to anſwer the ends of its creation, that, when God raiſes us to a more perfect ſtate of being, he will give us a frame and conſtitution ſuited to ſuch a ſtate. But there is no reaſon to ſuppoſe that any thing more was intended, or to infer from the difference there is between the heavenly bodies, that there will be a difference between the reſurrection-bodies of the Saints, and that one will ſhine with more glory than another. We hear nothing of this in Scripture; and we are told in more than one place, that all will be conformed to the image of Chriſt. Any peculiar honour and reward then, which will be conferred upon one perſon above another, muſt be of a different kind; and not ſuch as to affect a conſtitution which the Apoſtle ſuppoſes to be the ground-work and *ſine qua non* of immortality.

Ver. 43. Several commentators underſtand the Apoſtle here, as referring to the production of the body into the world, and not to its being buried in the ground. Which ever way we take this compariſon between the two bodies, the oppoſition is equally ſtrong, and to the Apoſtle's purpoſe. But I think the latter interpretation, which has been rejected, is preferable: becauſe the conſigning dead bodies to the ground, in hope of a reſurrection, ſeems to be the very circumſtance which ſuggeſted the compariſon. For the burial anſwers exactly

exactly to the ſeed-time, and the reſurrection to the harveſt. And the Apoſtle conſiders the preſent body, completely formed, as the ſeed of the reſurrection-body; which, not by any proceſs of nature, but by an immediate act of the divine power, riſes ſpiritual and immortal: the body that is ſown, no more than the ſeed that is ſown, being the body that ſhall be produced, but altogether different in its frame and properties. That it is ſaid to be ſown an animal body, and that the ſeed, to which it is compared, is conſidered as ſtill alive, having its ſeminal virtue or animal ſpirit, and afterwards dying, which are inſiſted upon in favour of the other interpretation, is far from being concluſive. For I think the Apoſtle may very well call it an animal body, though no longer living, in reſpect of its having no more than a capacity of mere animal life; and becauſe, if raiſed again in the ſame ſtate, it would ſtill partake of this life, and no other, that is, would ſtill be mortal and corruptible. Nor is any thing further neceſſary to the compariſon between the two ſeeds, than that both ſhould die, without any reſpect to the time when this death takes place, which is of no importance to his argument. For in both caſes that which dies is ſown, and nothing is raiſed except it die; which is the only concluſion that the Apoſtle draws againſt his oppoſers.

Ver. 44. We can have no other idea of a *ſpiritual* body, than that it is of a more noble and durable conſtitution than the bodies we have at preſent. For, as another Apoſtle ſays, *it does not yet appear what we ſhall be: but we know, that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him.* 1 John iii. 2. The future glory of the righteous is repreſented in Scripture as *a conformity to Chriſt, bearing his image, being faſhioned like unto his glorious body, receiving the building of God, and our houſes from heaven*; all which phraſes are of the ſame import, and ſignify our being raiſed incorruptible, or changed, at the appearance of Chriſt, from mortal to immortal. We may conclude from the above-mentioned phraſe of a ſpiritual body, that *ſpirit* and *ſpiritual*, in Scripture, do not always denote a ſtrictly immaterial ſubſtance. For what idea have we of *immaterial bodies?* And it is worth while to attend to the proof which the Apoſtle brings to ſhew that there are both animal and ſpiritual bodies: *Adam was made a living ſoul, but Chriſt a quickening ſpirit.* So that a *living ſoul* muſt be equivalent in the Apoſtle's language to an *animal body*, and a *ſpirit* here to a *ſpiritual body*; or elſe his proof is defective, and the citation from Geneſis cannot appear ſo pertinent.

Ver. 46. What becomes of that aſſertion, that "Adam was created immortal?" and how will it be made to conſiſt with the Apoſtle's deciſion in this place, concerning the priority of animal to ſpiritual bodies in the order of time? For if Adam was created immortal, he muſt have had a ſpiritual and heavenly body, and not an animal, earthly, and corruptible one. Then it follows, that the ſpiritual conſtitution was before the animal, contrary to what the Apoſtle aſſerts. Nor will it be ſufficient here to alledge, that he was indeed created immortal, but loſt this privilege, together with others, by his offence; for the Apoſtle is evidently ſpeaking of his formation, and refers to his being taken out of the ground; for which reaſon he calls him *earthy*. Adam, then, had an animal body before the fall, a body compoſed of fleſh and blood, and of conſequence mortal and corruptible.

Ver. 51. Thoſe paſſages of Scripture which ſpeak of the coming of Chriſt as *near at hand*, and in which the Apoſtles join themſelves with other Chriſtians in the

the common expectation of that day, as what might be looked for in or about their time, have given riſe to ſeveral ſuſpicions. The enemies of Chriſtianity have not been wanting to lay hold of ſo fair an occaſion, as they thought it, for taxing the apoſtles of Chriſt with impoſture; and repreſenting them to the world under the character of falſe prophets, who abuſed mankind with predictions, which, if nothing elſe, the length of time ſince elapſed has evidently diſcovered to be vain and deluſive: and others have thought that, at leaſt, the apoſtles were deceived in their expectations of the ſpeedy accompliſhment of this event. For theſe reaſons criticks have endeavoured to apply as many paſſages of this kind, as they well could, to an event which did indeed happen in or near the time of the Apoſtles, and has now been paſt a number of ages, namely, the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. But, after all, there are ſeveral others penned in the ſame ſtile, which are unqueſtionably applicable to nothing elſe but the final coming of Chriſt to judgment. We may be better able to diſcern how far ſuch ſuſpicions as we have mentioned are well founded, if we conſider, 1. what is ſaid in the New Teſtament concerning this event; and 2. the ends for which divine providence may be ſuppoſed to have revealed it in ſuch a particular manner; or, in other words, the fact and the reaſon of it.

I. With reſpect to the firſt of theſe particulars we may obſerve, 1. That the day of Chriſt is ſpoken of in general as *approaching*, *being near*, or *at hand*. We find the ſame form of expreſſion in the ancient prophets; who, upon predicting any judgment or revolution to take place in the ſtate of nations, ſometimes add, "The day of the Lord cometh, or is near," though they ſpeak of very different diſtances, and ſometimes very conſiderable ones. From which it may probably be conjectured, that this expreſſion was not deſigned to mark any particular period, ſo much as the certainty of the thing predicted, together with the brevity of all human affairs, and the trifling nature of that duration which is alloted to the grandeur or depreſſion of kingdoms. It would be in vain to go about to fix any time, within which an event may be ſaid to be near or at hand; becauſe it varies in ſo many reſpects, and depends entirely upon the nature of the ſubject ſpoken of. To-morrow is near; and the next year is near; the end of life and of the world alſo are near, becauſe they are both of them faſt approaching, and nothing intervenes to delay them beyond their appointed periods. On the other hand, to a perſon in imminent danger, and whoſe caſe requires immediate aſſiſtance, the help which is delayed but for an half hour, is at a diſtance and long in coming. That the longeſt period of human life is ſhort and fleeting, has been the conſtant leſſon of Philoſophers and Divines. And what does the whole ſucceſſion of generations, from the beginning of the world down to our day, preſent us with but a ſhort ſtring of ſhort lives, filled with haſty occurrences, which, conſiderable as they might appear to thoſe whoſe paſſions and ſouls were engaged in them, are, upon a review, no more than *a tale that is told*, and the time that was taken up in them but as *yeſterday when it is paſt?* And though we ſhould allow the ſame or a much longer ſpace to ſucceeding generations, yet will not the rapid progreſs with which months and years paſs away ſufficiently juſtify us in ſaying, that *the time is ſhort, and the end of all things is at hand?* Thus the whole duration of the world, both paſt and future, appears but as a few moments, taken out of that infinite time which precedes and comes after it. Further, we may properly ſay concerning any divine interpoſition,

for the preſervation of the righteous or the judgment of the wicked, that it is near, if it takes place in the proper ſeaſon, and is not protracted by unneceſſary delays; but is ſuch as may juſtly be hoped for by the former, or dreaded by the latter. For this reaſon God is ſtiled *a very preſent help in time of trouble*; and the prophet Iſaiah, L. 8. ſpeaking of the Divine Being, ſays, *He is near who juſtifieth me*, or avengeth my wrong, becauſe his help is ſure and to be depended upon. And our Lord, after having predicted the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, adds, *when ye ſhall ſee all theſe things, know that your redemption is nigh*, that is, that it is certainly approaching. For that they were not to look upon them as any ſign of his immediate coming will appear, when we ſhew that it was not to be preceded by any ſuch ſigns. But it was very reaſonable that they ſhould be encouraged, from the accompliſhment of one prediction, to hope with greater confidence for the accompliſhment of another. Nor is it likely that he refers to their deliverance from Jewiſh enemies, as this paſſage has been ſometimes interpreted: for when they had ſeen all thoſe things happen, which are there predicted, they would not diſcern that ſuch a deliverance was nigh, but rather that it was already accompliſhed. Beſides, this ſhort breathing and partial reſcue, as it may be called, hardly deſerved the name of a deliverance, ſince they had more terrible enemies to fear from another quarter, and were ſtill obnoxious to the ruling powers of the world wherever they came, who treated them often with much greater ſeverity, than they had ever experienced during the moſt bitter perſecutions of the Jewiſh zealots.

2. Though this event be ſpoken of as certain and at hand, yet the preciſe time of its accompliſhment is always repreſented as abſolutely uncertain and unknown. When our Lord propheſied of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, he fixed that very generation for the accompliſhment of his prediction. But, ſpeaking of his own coming, he ſays, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.* And, in the courſe of his converſation with the diſciples, he purpoſely makes the ſuppoſition of his coming at different times; for inſtance, at the firſt, ſecond, or third watch, according to the parabolic repreſentation: from whence he draws this concluſion; *Watch therefore, for ye know not at what hour your Lord cometh*, Matth. xxiv. 42. Mark xiii. 35. And, 3. to conclude the Scripture account of this great event, it is deſcribed as being ſudden and inſtantaneous, that is, preceded by no ſigns or warnings, not coming on gradually and ſlowly, ſo that men might obſerve it at a diſtance, and ſay, Lo here is Chriſt, or Lo there, but quick and ſudden; and as the lightning darts from the Eaſt to the Weſt, from one corner of the heavens to the other, ſo ſhall the coming of the Son of Man be, *Matth.* xxiv. 27. It is for the ſame reaſon that he is ſaid ſometimes *to come as a thief in the night*, that is, unexpectedly and without notice. And St. Paul, ſpeaking of the ſame thing to the Theſſalonians, ſays, *When they ſay peace and ſafety, then ſudden deſtruction cometh*, 1 Theſſ. v. 3.

II. The above remarks, joined to another which I am about to make, will help us to the moſt probable reaſons why the preciſe time when this event ſhould happen was left ſo undetermined, or rather entirely unknown. For as the goſpel has fixed the time of judgment to the coming of Chriſt, and gives men no promiſe or expectation of a retribution before that period, to have determined this coming to any particular æra, would have been attended with two manifeſt

inconveniencies. First, the more remote any ages of men were from the period foretold, they would conſider themſelves as ſo much the leſs intereſted in its approach; and therefore the expectation of it would have a proportionably ſmaller influence upon their apprehenſions and practice. Secondly, the nearer the world drew to its concluſion, men would be more ſtrongly affected, and at laſt thrown into the utmoſt confuſion. The ſprings of human action would by degrees loſe their force, the buſineſs of the world come to a ſtand, while all were intent upon the approaching revolution. Theſe inconveniencies are ſufficiently provided againſt by the wiſdom of heaven. For as we are cautioned to beware of falſe prophets, who ſhould pretend to tell us that Chriſt is in this or that place, and immediately to appear: ſo we are warned againſt another abuſe, proceeding from a contrary cauſe, namely, a preſumption of its delay, by which too many would be led to ſet at defiance an event which they thought afar off, and long in coming, *Matth.* xxiv. 48. And further, the ſuddenneſs with which it will take place, is intended to prevent that diſorder in human affairs, which the apprehenſion of its near but ſlow approach would at any time occaſion. *And as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be.* Matth. xxiv. 38, 39. The uncertainty of this event bears a near reſemblance to the natural uncertainty of human life, and ſeems calculated to produce the ſame effect. He who tells me that I am mortal, tells me that death is near, that life is ſhort and the days few, that I may die ſoon or ſuddenly, that I ſhould be continually expecting the end of life, and not be ſurprized if it ſhould take place to-morrow. And he is equally a true prophet, whether I die the next day or live beyond fourſcore. Is not this the language of Scripture, with reſpect to the coming of Chriſt?

It will be needful here to examine one paſſage which ſeems to contradict what I have been ſaying, and is generally quoted to prove that the apoſtles did not teach their converts to conſider the coming of Chriſt as at hand, but rather fixed it to a diſtant period. The paſſage I refer to is as follows: *That ye be not ſoon ſhaken in mind, or be troubled neither by ſpirit nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Chriſt is at hand,* 2 Theſſ. ii. 2. Now as to this I obſerve, that the word which is rendered *at hand* is not the ſame with that which is rendered ſo in other parts of Scripture. And without doubt it ſhould have been rendered differently here; if for no other reaſon, to avoid fixing a downright contradiction upon the doctrine of the New Teſtament. It is a much ſtronger expreſſion than is uſed elſewhere of this event, and is applicable to none but a preſent event, or one ſo very near that, according to the common uſe of words, it may be ſaid to be *preſent*, or *juſt here*. The word is uſed at leaſt ſix times in the New Teſtament, and by the ſame writer, but always in the ſignification of the time preſent. And thus it is uſed by Greek writers in general, of which I will produce two or three inſtances: επει δε η κρισις ενεστη, *when the trial came on.* Plutarch. de fraterno amore. Op. Mor. p. 331. l. 20. ινα οταν ο τε θανατε καιρος ενεστη, *that when death ſhall arrive.* Hierocles in aurea carmina, p. 308. l. 2. Ed. 1742. Ο Θεος οιδε τα παντα προ της γενεσεως αυτων· και ουδεν εκ τε ενεσθηκεναι οτε ενεσθηκε πρωτον αυτω γινωσκεσθαι ως προ τετε μη γνωσθεν. *God knows all things before they happen; and is not firſt acquainted with them from their coming*

coming to paſs at the time they come to paſs, as if they were unknown to him before. Origen de oratione, § 14. It appears then, that the perſons to whom the Apoſtle wrote, believed that the day of Chriſt was inſtant, or would immediately appear, perhaps within the ſpace of a few days or weeks. And it is probable that they took up this perſuaſion from what he had ſaid in his former epiſtle; or elſe that ſome perſons had been induced to forge an epiſtle or meſſage from him, which fixed it to ſo near a period. Nor need we wonder at this, when we recollect what we have ſeen or heard in our own days, or have read in hiſtory, of perſons pretending to foretell the day of judgment, and deceiving many. The error of thoſe Chriſtians was not therefore the believing in general that the Lord was at hand, or looking for his ſecond coming; but the agreeing with theſe impoſtors in fixing it to a certain determinate æra.

From what has been ſaid it will fully appear, 1. that the apoſtles and Chriſtians of that age could not, conſiſtently with what they had learned of Chriſt, expect his coming before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem; nor, according to 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 3. before the revelation of the man of ſin, whoever it be that is there ſpoken of. But the firſt of theſe they knew would happen before the then preſent generation was extinct, and the laſt they knew not how ſoon. 2. After the deſtruction of Jeruſalem they could not tell how ſoon Chriſt would appear; or rather they would begin to look for his coming from that time. 3. Their expectation would be of that kind which we ever have of an event, which we believe will certainly take place, but the exact time of which is altogether unknown. For want of attending to this, the apoſtles have ſometimes been charged with error, and ſometimes with impoſture. Men have argued in this manner: the apoſtles evidently expected Chriſt to appear in or near their time; but he did not appear then; therefore they muſt either deceive or be deceived. But ſuppoſe a man to be informed concerning a particular event, that it will happen after ſuch a time, after a year for inſtance, he will begin to look for it from the end of the year, and ſo on till it comes to paſs: and though in a certain ſenſe he expects it every day, becauſe he does not know but it may take place, yet he is not properly deceived or diſappointed at its delay, becauſe at the ſame time he knew that it might not, and he did not certainly expect it on any particular day. Such ſeems to have been the expectation of the apoſtles, and which they encouraged in the firſt Chriſtians. They did not predict the coming of Chriſt to judgment at ſuch a day or hour, but taught men to be always looking for and haſtening to it, that, whenever he ſhould appear, they might be found of him in peace. And however they might think it poſſible, that Chriſt would come ſpeedily to judgment; that they did not think it neceſſary to the truth of his religion, or that he had bound himſelf to it by the words of his promiſe, appears from the manner in which they obviated objections which might be raiſed by others, as well as from their frequent exhortations to Chriſtians to a patient waiting for that glorious event. Thus St. Peter, in his ſecond epiſtle, chap. iii, iv. after mentioning the caſe of ſuch objectors, who would be ready to ſay, Where is the promiſe of his coming? or what ſigns are there of ſo great a revolution in human affairs, ſince all things continue as they were from the beginning? warns Chriſtians not to remit of their expectation of this event, or through impatience to queſtion the power and veracity of God. For as on the one hand it would not be at all wonderful if this event ſhould take

place very ſoon, becauſe one day is with the Lord as a thouſand years, who can execute the purpoſes of his wiſdom and juſtice as eaſily within a ſhort as after a long ſpace of time: ſo, on the other hand, though it ſhould be put off for many ages, there would be no cauſe to diſtruſt its accompliſhment; ſince length of time made no alteration, either in the certainty of the promiſe or the fidelity of him that made it; to whom a thouſand years were but as one day, being unchangeably the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. He was therefore far from being ſlack concerning his promiſe, either dubious or dilatory about the performance, but only long-ſuffering to the human race, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.

Nor was their ignorance of the preciſe time of Chriſt's coming any diſhonour to them: for the ſervant is not greater than his Lord, nor the diſciple than his maſter. Chriſt himſelf knew it not, while upon earth. Further, it is probable they might not even in imagination conceive it to be ſo diſtant, as we know it to have been. It is not given to us, any more than it was to them, to know the times and the ſeaſons: but we have this advantage, if it be any, in being born ſo long after them, that we ſee clearly what is now paſt; though, with reſpect to futurity, we are left as much in the dark as they were. 4. Therefore the apoſtles ſpoke naturally, and agreeably to their knowledge of the uncertainty of this event, when they uſed ſuch expreſſions as theſe, We ſhall not all die, and we who are alive at the coming of Chriſt.

Ver. 52. This affords another proof, that the Apoſtle is ſpeaking only of the reſurrection of the juſt. For it is never ſaid in Scripture, that the wicked ſhall be raiſed incorruptible. The contrary ſeems aſſerted, *Gal.* vi. 8. *for he that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption; but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.*

Ver. 53. Dr. Whitby may be right when he obſerves, that the ſubſtantive σωμα, *body*, is underſtood after φθαρτον, *corruptible*. But I do not ſee how he can infer from hence, that the bodies we now have are raiſed to immortality, of which, if we believe the Apoſtle, they are incapable; ſeeing they are compoſed of fleſh and blood, which are eſſentially mortal and corruptible. The Doctor's miſtake ariſes from hence, that he ſuppoſes the Apoſtle to ſpeak of them that are raiſed. Whereas, if we conſider it more attentively, we ſhall ſee reaſon to believe, that it can only be ſaid with relation to the living, who ſhall be changed. For the Apoſtle tells us that the dead are raiſed incorruptible, and therefore have no occaſion to put on incorruption, or aſſume a quality of which they are already poſſeſſed. At moſt, it can only be ſpoken of our preſent bodies, which are changed by being raiſed incorruptible; and not raiſed firſt corruptible, to be changed and become capable of everlaſting life by another act of the divine power; which would be both unneceſſary, and contrary to the expreſs words of Scripture. In this ſenſe, and in this only, it is ſaid, ver. 51. *that we ſhall all be changed.*

I am quite at a loſs to divine what the ſame learned Writer means, where he ſays, that the Scripture and all the Antients ſpeak of a cloathing, which our raiſed bodies ſhall put on, and which the Jews conjecture to be a cloathing of Light or pure Flame. Such Jewiſh fables have no great tendency to illuſtrate the doctrine of Chriſt and his apoſtles. The Scripture indeed ſpeaks of our putting on incorruption, and being cloathed with immortality: but

theſe

theſe are undoubtedly figurative expreſſions. When we put on incorruption, we do at the ſame time put off corruption. But what can be meant by being cloathed with corruption? Is corruption a true and proper garment? or only figurative and improper? We have no reaſon to take theſe expreſſions according to the letter, or to believe that we ſhall put on incorruption and immortality, as we do the cloaths we wear in this world.

Ver. 54. Τοτε γενησεται ο λογος ο γεγραμμενος may be tranſlated *then will be ſaid that which is written.* Γινεσθαι οι λογοι περι τινος, according to the Greek idiom ſignifies, *ſuch a particular ſubject is diſcourſed of.* Though the Apoſtle cites paſſages from two of the prophets, it is not neceſſary to ſuppoſe that he introduces them as ſtrictly prophetic, but only as very deſcriptive of this grand event. He ſeems alſo to have added ſomething of his own to the ſentences which he has borrowed from the prophets, and adapted to the joyful occaſion. We may therefore conſider the whole Anthem, or ſong of Victory, put into the mouth of the Saints, as comprehended in theſe words, "Death is ſwallowed up in Victory! "O Death! where is thy Sting? O Grave! where is thy Victory? The ſting "of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law. But thanks be to God, "who giveth us the victory, by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." Though all the redeemed of God will have abundant reaſon to triumph in that day, when he manifeſts himſelf for their deliverance: yet theſe exclamations ſeem more peculiarly applicable, and are perhaps introduced with a particular view, to thoſe who entirely eſcape death; who may therefore be ſuppoſed *emphatically* to join in this inſult upon the grand deſtroyer, O Death, where is thy Sting? It is when this corruptible ſhall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality (which expreſſions, as was obſerved, probably denote the change of the living, in whom mortality is ſwallowed up of life, ſo that they never come into a ſtate of death) that this language is to be uſed, Death is ſwallowed up in Victory, &c.

Ver. 56. The Apoſtle here repreſents all who come under the power of death, as dying in conſequence of a judicial proceſs. The Law is ſeated upon the bench, and paſſes ſentence upon them as tranſgreſſors. Hence it is the ſtrength and authority of ſin, or the judge who gives Death his legal warrant to deſtroy. Sin, in this figurative repreſentation, holds the place of a ſting or dart in the hands of Death, with which he, as the attendant or ſervant of the Judge, executes the ſentence that is paſt upon us. There is a beauty and propriety in this imagery, which repreſents the crimes of mankind, that are the moving cauſes of their puniſhment, as the immediate inſtruments of vengeance. The ſentiment is the very ſame which the Poet has expreſſed thus: Sin

Brought death into the world and all our woe.

The attributing perſonal characters to moral qualities and ideal beings, and introducing them as ſpeakers or agents, is a liberty indulged to every writer. And the knowledge of this helps us to explain a thouſand paſſages, which would otherwiſe be quite unintelligible. Learned men have ſeen the neceſſity of recurring to this, for the explanation of the ſeventh chapter of the Romans; in which diſcourſe we are to underſtand by Sin, (which is dead without the law and lives upon its promulgation) an allegorical being, that, beſides the office of a tempter (which it does not derive from the law, but has before all laws,

and in conſequence of human weakneſs) ſuſtains the office of a puniſher of crimes, which it does derive from a law and would not have without it. For if by Sin, which receives its life and being from the law, we underſtand the depraved qualities of the human heart, or the vicious actions which flow from them, we make the law of God the direct, neceſſary, and efficient cauſe of all the evil in the world—A ſentiment which the Apoſtle would have rejected with abhorrence.

Ver. 58. The Apoſtle here cloſes the ſubject, and having eſtabliſhed his grand point, namely, a reſurrection by Jeſus Chriſt, he exhorts his converts to be ſtedfaſt in the belief of it, and maintain a converſation ſuitable to the hope of their calling; ſince their Chriſtian labour would not be without its fruit, but muſt yield abundantly that life, peace, and happineſs, which are *reſerved in heaven for them who by the power of God are kept through faith unto ſalvation.*

A

COMMENTARY

Upon every VERSE of

The Sixth, Seventh, and Part of the Eighth Chapters of the ROMANS,

WITH

CRITICAL REMARKS.

CHAPTER VI.

THE Apoſtle having celebrated the goodneſs and love of God to men, which had been ſo eminently diſplayed in the full and free remiſſion of their paſt offences by the goſpel, and in raiſing them to the hopes of an eternal inheritance ſo far exceeding their expectations and deſerts, proceeds to obviate thoſe abuſes which frequently ſpring from preſuming too much upon his patience and lenity, and to remove entirely the fooliſh conceit, which ſome might entertain, of doing more honour to God, and aggrandizing his clemency, by accumulating their own guilt and unworthineſs. " I have ſaid that where ſin " hath abounded, and been moſt deſtructive to the rational offspring of God, " there the divine favour and compaſſion hath more fully abounded in deliver- " ing them from its power and condemnation. What then, will any of us " come to this concluſion, that we will go on to commit ſin, that the grace " of God may abound ſtill more toward us, and be further magnified in our " ſalvation at laſt?"

Ver. 2. I propoſe a ſmall emendation in the rendering of this verſe, which though not very material to the ſenſe, is ſomewhat to the accuracy of the verſion. Οιτινες απεθανομεν τη αμαρτια, is " we who *have died* to ſin." If our tranſlators had been more attentive to this, they would not have blundered ſo in rendering 2 Cor. v. 14. The Apoſtle is making a noble apology, if it may be ſtiled ſo, for his diſintereſted conduct, " For the love of Chriſt con- " ſtrains us," or as it might be rendered " connects and binds us together in " the cloſeſt bonds of friendſhip and benevolence. Becauſe we thus judge, " that if one man died for all, then all *have died, that is,* " to themſelves."

For,

For, as he goes on, Chriſt "died for all, that they who live ſhould not hence-"forth live unto themſelves, but unto him who died for them and roſe again." Chriſtians are here again elegantly repreſented as dying with Chriſt to all kinds of ſin, and more eſpecially to the ſelfiſh and malignant paſſions. With reſpect to theſe figures, which are ſo frequent in the writings of the Apoſtle, of being *dead to ſin*, and *dead in ſin*, it is proper to obſerve, that no argument can be drawn from them in favour of mens incapacity to do well or ill. And for this reaſon, becauſe if we allow them to conclude any thing, they conclude too much. For if wicked heathens, who are ſaid to have been dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, were, during that period, as much incapable of doing good, as men literally and truly dead, it muſt follow by the ſame reaſoning, that good Chriſtians, nay all of whatever character, who have named the name of Chriſt, and been baptiſed into the faith of the goſpel, have loſt their power of doing ill, and can no more commit ſin, than the man who died yeſterday or five hundred years ago—an abſurdity too groſs to impoſe upon any, who are capable of thinking. The New Teſtament conſiders mankind, even in their moſt depraved ſtate, as moral agents; and therefore accountable for their conduct.

The latter part of the verſe may be tranſlated either "how ſhall we live *any* "*longer*, or, *again*, in it." But perhaps the whole is capable of a more animated turn, than our verſion gives to it, and more agreeable to the manner in which it is introduced. "God forbid. We who have died to ſin: how! "ſhall we live again in it?"

Ver. 3 and 4. He proves his aſſertion that Chriſtians had died to ſin. This he does from the nature of their baptiſm; and becauſe of the figure which he uſes, he alludes to the particular mode of it by immerſion, which bears ſome reſemblance to a burial under ground, as the riſing out of the water does to a reſurrection from the dead. But the ſtrength of his argument does not depend upon the mere rite of baptiſm, and much leſs upon the mode of a rite. For we muſt own that the obligation of Chriſtians to holineſs, from the death, reſurrection, and exaltation of Chriſt are equally ſtrong, whatever mode of initiation had taken place in the beginning; or without any, by the bare knowledge and profeſſion of the goſpel.

Ver. 5. "For if we have been aſſociated to Chriſt, in an inſtitution which "bears a reſemblance to his death, ſurely with much more reaſon ſhall we be "ſo, in a reſemblance to his reſurrection and endleſs life." Αλλα και here implies *doubtleſs*, *ſurely alſo*. The Apoſtle argues the neceſſity or reaſonableneſs of the latter from the former, as being cloſely connected; and alſo apparently more deſirable to be aſſimilated to the life, than to the death of Chriſt. The diſlike which ſome critics have ſhewn to αλλα και after ει in this place, is entirely without reaſon. Raphelius has produced two inſtances of ſuch an uſe of the particles, one from Herodotus and the other from Chryſoſtom. It is to be found beſides no leſs than half a dozen times, in the little piece of Chryſoſtom *de ſacerdotio*. See p. 18. l. 6—70. l. 6—166. l. 15—196. l. 9—230. l. ult. —238. l. 22. Ed. Hughes. Hierocles alſo, ει γαρ και εφ' ημιν η αιρεσις των καλων, αλλα και αυτο το εφ' ημιν θειθεν εχουσις, κ. τ. λ. "For if the choice of virtue "be in our own power, nevertheleſs having received this liberty of choice "from God, &c." In *Aurea Carmina*, p. 226. l. 15. And ει δη—αλλα αμως. *Hierocli Fragmenta*, p. 258. l. 1. Thoſe who have objected to αλλα και following

lowing it, and preferred μαλλον και which is the reading of ſome copies, were not aware that αλλα και is elliptical, and ſtands for ου μονον αλλα και here, which is very frequent in Greek writers; as it does in many other places, and particularly thoſe quoted above, for ου μον αλλα και. For which reaſon in the Apoſtle it muſt ſignify, *not only ſo but what is more alſo*, and in the others *yet* or *nevertheleſs*.

Ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. "Knowing that the very end of Chriſtian baptiſm is, that "our old man being crucified together with Chriſt, ſo that the body of ſin be en- "tirely deſtroyed, we might no longer ſubmit to its ſlavery. For he that is dead "muſt of courſe be freed from this miſerable vaſſalage. And if we have died "together with Chriſt, we believe that we ſhall alſo live together with him: "as we know that Chriſt being raiſed from the dead, will die no more, death "having no more power over him; and thus continuing for ever, he is able "to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him."

Ver. 10. From the mention of our Chriſtian hope, in the view of encouraging them to continued holineſs, he returns to his ſubject, which is, the compariſon between Chriſt and his diſciples, the real death and reſurrection of the former, and the figurative ones of the latter. I chuſe here to join τη αμαρτια to the firſt member of the ſentence, becauſe the writer is not mentioning any new or peculiar end of Chriſt's death, but only ſhewing that it was not to be repeated; and for the ſake of his compariſon, he calls it a death unto ſin. "For in that he died unto ſin, he died once for all, not to live again this frail "and mortal life: but in that he liveth, he liveth continually unto God." We may ſee in what ſenſe Chriſt is ſaid to die to ſin, by comparing this paſſage with Heb. vii. 26, 27, 28. where the writer of that epiſtle repreſents Chriſt in his exalted ſtate, as in a peculiar manner conſecrated or made perfect, *holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners*; in contradiſtinction to the prieſts of the law, who, to whatever pitch of human virtue they might arrive, were ſtill encompaſſed with the infirmities of fleſh, and needed to offer ſacrifices continually, both for their own ſins and the ſins of the people.

Ver. 11, 12, 13. He proceeds to exhort them, after this example, to conſider themſelves as for ever dead to ſin, no more to return under its power; and to live henceforth unto God, and yield their members as inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto him.

Ver. 14. He encourages them to this conduct from the conſideration of the divine clemency and goodneſs, revealed to them by the goſpel, in which was promiſed a free pardon of their former ſins, and the acceptance of their future ſincere obedience. Sin is here introduced as a perſon, and in the character of a Lord or Sovereign proprietor, who diſpoſes of the lives of his vaſſals with an unlimited authority, till they become free from his tyranny. And his dominion *here* is not merely what the Apoſtle before calls his reign in their mortal bodies, or their obeying him in the luſts of the fleſh, but the power he acquires in conſequence of this to puniſh and deſtroy his captives, and which he exerciſes with a mercileſs hand. For as Dr. Whitby well obſerves, if the Apoſtle only intended to ſay, that ſin ſhould be no longer obeyed by them, there ſeems no room for the inference which he fears they would make from his aſſertion. The ſenſe therefore is this, "Be not afraid that notwithſtanding your repentance "and newneſs of life, ſin ſhould ſtill exert his dominion over you to your de-

" ſtruction. For you are not then under the ſentence of the law, that you " ſhould fear his power; being exempted from condemnation by the favour " and compaſſion of the Almighty Sovereign." He does not go on directly to prove and illuſtrate this point, that penitents are not under the law, but under grace; being carried away by his apprehenſion that this poſition would become liable to the ſame abuſe as the other, in the hands of men diſpoſed to pervert and miſunderſtand him. He therefore haſtens to prevent it, and afterwards returns to the proof of his aſſertion; which we find treated at large in the ſeventh chapter.

Ver. 15. " What then, ſhall we ſin for this very reaſon, becauſe we are not " under the law, but under grace? And will any of you be ſo fooliſh as to " turn that very conſideration, which I have urged to confirm your virtuous " purpoſes, into an argument for perſiſting in wickedneſs, ſince God is ſo kind " and merciful to forgive our ſins? Wretched ſophiſtry! who does not ſee, " that the indemnity which the goſpel proclaims, is not of ſuch a nature as to " give us a licence for continuing in ſin; but has been granted under theſe " reſtrictions, that we forſake the ſlavery of vice, and become his ſervants whoſe " favour alone muſt deliver us from the ſentence we have merited by our " wicked conduct? And whatſoever you may boaſt concerning the divine " grace and indulgence, it is ſtill true that you are his ſervants to whom you " yield yourſelves; whether it be to ſin, whoſe ſervice muſt end in death, or " to the obedience of the goſpel, which brings righteouſneſs;" that is, *ſalvation* and *life*. For the word δικαιοσυνη, which we generally tranſlate *righteouſneſs*, may ſignify either, but it ſeems determined in this place to the latter ſenſe, by being placed in oppoſition to death: and the Apoſtle uſes the word δικαιοω, to *juſtify*, in the ſenſe of *delivering*, at the ſeventh verſe of this chapter.

Ver. 17. " Thanks be to God, that whereas you were once the vaſſals of " ſin, you have obeyed from the heart that model of heavenly doctrine, in " which you have been inſtructed." The Apoſtle cannot be ſuppoſed by any reaſonable perſon to return God thanks, that his converts had been ſervants to ſin. But he uſes an adverſative ſentence, where the firſt member ſtands in oppoſition to the latter, inſtead of depending upon it by the participle. It is juſt the ſame as if he had ſaid, " I thank God, that having been the ſervants of " ſin, &c." It is poſſible that the particle μεν which anſwers to δε in the Greek language, and which muſt be underſtood here, has been careleſly dropt. But if it ſhould be thought not ſo likely that this particle ſhould originally have belonged to the ſentence, without being found in any copy, we have frequent inſtances of the like omiſſions, which muſt have proceeded either from the authors themſelves, or their tranſcribers. So James ii. 11. ει δε υ (ſup. μεν) μοιχευσεις, φονευσεις δε, See alſo 2 Pet. ii. 20. Thus Plato omits this particle, Τι δε αν αυ γυμναστικη (ſup. μεν) πολλα πονη και ευωχηται ευ μαλα, μουσικης δε και φιλοσοφιας μη απληται, κ. τ. λ. " What if a man who exerciſes " his body with great care, and keeps up to a high kind of diet, ſhould " altogether neglect muſic and philoſophy." *De rep.* L. iii. p. 228. l. 28. Ed. Maſſy. And Plutarch, δι' ην ſc. αιτιαν, οργιζομενων (ſup. μεν) η λυπουμενων, η δεδιοτων φωνας ακουοντες αχθομεθα και δυσκολαινομεν· οι δε υποκρινομενοι ταυτα τα παθη και μιμουμενοι τας φωνας αυτων και τας διαθεσεις ευφραινουσιν ημας. " For " what reaſon, when the real expreſſions of anger, grief, or fear for the moſt

" part

" part cauſe diſpleaſure, we ſhould be ſo much delighted with the imitation of " theſe paſſions." Sympoſiac. Lib. 5. Quæſt. 1. Euripides in the ſame manner, as quoted by the above editor of Plato's republic, Lib. 9. p. 242. notes.

Τυραννις εἰναι Θεων Βιος νομιζεσθαι
Το μη θανειν (ſup. μεν) γαρ ουκ ἐχει, τα δ' αλλα ἐχει.

" The life of a monarch paſſes for a copy of that of the gods; for though it " cannot give immortality, it gives every thing elſe." And in the following paſſage of Ariſtotle both μεν and δε ſeem to have been omitted, ατοπον γαρ ει ο αυτος απιστος, οι τουτῳ λογοι ἐσονται πιστοι, " for it is impoſſible, when a man's " veracity is rendered ſuſpicious, that what he ſays ſhould gain much belief." Rhetoric. L. 3. cap. 10. which omiſſion is ſomewhat ſimilar to that of Luke x. 21. Now it is to be obſerved of all ſentences in this form, where μεν is expreſſed or underſtood, that the ſtreſs of them does not lie in the firſt member, which is never the ſubject of that aſſertion, negation, queſtion, illation, accuſation, thankſgiving, &c. with which the writer ſets out; but either implies ſome conceſſion, exception, or reſtrictive clauſe, to qualify the following propoſition, or elſe is a divided way of expreſſing that by two verbs, which other languages more commonly expreſs by one with the participle. For theſe reaſons the writers of ſyntax admoniſh us, that it muſt be frequently rendered into Latin by the participle, or, as they call it, the abſolute caſe: and it is often no more than a kind of parentheſis. Thus Demoſthenes, in his oration for the liberty of the Rhodians, και ουκ εγω μεν ταυτα ειπον, υμιν δε ουκ εδοκουν ορθως λεγειν· αλλα και υμιν ηρεσκε ταυτα. Nothing can be more evident than that the ſpeaker did not intend to deny his having ſaid the things referred to (which the words tranſlated too cloſely, and without attending to the ſpirit and purport of the ſentence, would imply) but it is the ſame as if he had ſaid, without the particles μεν and δε, και ουκ εγω ταυτα ειπων. And as the form of thankſgiving in the Apoſtle's ſentence, ſo the negation in that of the Orator, by virtue of the particle, does not at all relate to the former member, but muſt either be conſidered as entirely parenthetical, or in an elegant and even juſt tranſlation thrown into another form. Therefore in Engliſh it ſhould be rendered thus: " And " when I ſaid theſe things to you, you gave no marks of diſlike or heſitation: " on the contrary they were entirely approved by you:" or in Latin, *Neque hæc apud vos locutus, minime probanda vobis viſus eram dicere; imo valde placebant.* So Chryſoſtom, in a ſpeech which he attributes to his mother, και μην ουδε εκεινο αν ἐχοις ειπειν και αιτιασασθαι, οτι την μεν χηρειαν γενναιως ηνεγκαμεν, την δε ουσιαν σοι την πατρωαν ηλαττωσαμεν. Here alſo it is evident, that the former member can be no part of the charge brought againſt the woman, but a great conceſſion in her favour; and ſhould be rendered, " Nor can you juſtly lay this " to my charge, that though I have borne my widowed ſtate with a great deal " of fortitude, yet I have waſted your paternal fortunes." And even in aſſigning the reaſon of a thing, that member of the ſentence which follows γαρ *for*, joined with μεν, is no part of the reaſon given, but often a mere caution thrown in to prevent miſtakes. Γενει μεν γαρ Ηρακλειδαι δηπουθεν ησαν και οι νεωτατοι των εν Σπαρτῃ Βασιλεων· ο δε τοικε βουλομενῳ τους προσθεν ἐκεινους και συνεγγυς Ηρακλεους, ονομαζειν Ηρακλειδας. " For though all, even the lateſt kings of Sparta, are " deſcended from Hercules, yet he ſeems to call thoſe peculiarly by the name

" of Heraclidæ, who were the firſt and neareſt in line of deſcent to their il-
" luſtrious progenitor." *Plutarch. in Lycurgo*, V. 1. p. 86. l. 2.

What has been ſaid may throw ſome light upon another paſſage of Scripture, 1 Pet. iv. 6. which has been thought very obſcure. I will here give a verſion of it, agreeable to the above remarks. " For on this account was *it* (namely " a judgment to come which he has juſt been ſpeaking of) preached for the dead " alſo, that, after they have been condemned on the part of men (or as far as " human power extends) in the fleſh, they might live by the favour of God, " and the interpoſition of his Spirit and power." The Apoſtle had juſt touched upon the conduct of vicious Heathens, who reviled the Chriſtians for their ſuperior purity and goodneſs. Theſe, he ſays, ſhall give an account to him who is ready to judge both the living and the dead. Having ſpoken of the dead being judged, he enlarges upon this for the encouragement of ſuch as were daily expoſed to outrages and perſecutions, and in danger of loſing their lives for their adherence to the goſpel. And here he gives a very rational and pertinent account, why the dead as well as the living were included in the annunciation of a future judgment; which God has ordained for correcting the irregularities that have taken place in the preſent life, and particularly, as we may ſuppoſe, for the ſake of ſuch as have ſuffered unjuſtly, and periſhed in defence of truth and righteouſneſs; namely, to let the world ſee that he has received their appeal, and ſummoned their cauſe before his own tribunal, ſo that the ignorance or malice of men ſhall have determined nothing final concerning their ſtate or character, ſince he will interpoſe at length to avenge his own elect, and raiſe them by his mighty power to honour and immortality. Ευαγγελιζω may perhaps ſignify ſimply *to preach*; but, ſince the Apoſtle ſeems ſpeaking particularly of the righteous dead, nothing forbids but that we ſhould render it " the glad tidings, " namely of a future judgment, were preached." Τοις νεκροις, being in the caſe of relation, may be rendered either *to* or *for* and *concerning the dead*. But it muſt be rendered here *for* or *concerning the dead*; unleſs we ſhould ſuppoſe that, in a figurative repreſentation, the dead are conſidered as hearing and attending to thoſe tidings, which concerned them as well as the living. And that one or the other of theſe was intended by the Apoſtle, will appear very likely from comparing this paſſage with what he ſays in the preceding chapter, v. 19. concerning Chriſt's preaching by the Spirit of God to the ſpirits in priſon: which is probably nothing more than a comment of St. Peter upon that paſſage of Iſaiah, lxi. 1. " The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me " to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath ſent me to bind up the " broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the " priſon to them that are bound." This prophecy being applied by Chriſt to himſelf, when he read it in the ſynagogue, *Luke* iv. 21. the Apoſtle ſeems to conſider all who were gone out of the world as the captives ſpoken of, being held under the power of death, and confined in the priſon of the grave. And if we will not indulge any fancies, concerning Chriſt's going into another ſtate to publiſh his doctrine, or acting the part of a preacher many ages before he appeared in the world, we muſt ſay, that the goſpel, which he preached in perſon during his life-time, or by his apoſtles after his aſcenſion, as it contained the doctrine of a reſurrection, was ſuch a proclamation of deliverance for the captive ſpirits, and of the opening of the priſon to them that were bound in the chains

chains of death. And in this number were included such as had been disobedient in the days of Noah, and for their wickedness perished by the flood; who were reserved along with others in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day. But there is no room to enlarge further upon these passages. It will be sufficient to observe here, in pursuance of the design with which they were introduced, that the particle ινα, *to the end that*, 1 Pet. iv. 6. does not relate to the member immediately following, but only to the latter part of the sentence. And κριθωσι μεν must be translated as if it had been κριθεντες or οταν κριθωσι, or by a parenthesis in this manner, "that, let them have been condemned," &c. Grotius, agreeable to the sense, renders it *quamvis damnati sint*. For it could not be St. Peter's design to say, that the dead were included in the proclamation of a future judgment, to the end that *they might have been condemned*, &c. which the words literally rendered imply. And if we do not interpret St. Paul in the same manner, δε *but*, according to the custom of Greek writers, must begin a new sentence; and we make him return thanks to God for nothing but their having been servants of sin: which idea is indeed too plainly suggested by our common translation.

Ver. 18. "Let this then weigh with you: and remember that being deli-
"vered, as you were, from the bondage of Sin, you then entered into the
"service of righteousness."

Ver. 19. "You cannot complain of my injunctions, since I exact nothing
"from you severe or unreasonable, and this in consideration of the infirmity
"of your Flesh." For surely it is just, "that as in the times of your former
"ignorance and vanity, you have yielded your members the instruments of
"impurity and iniquity, to commit all manner of vice, so now you should yield
"them as servants of righteousness, unto sanctification." The Apostle does not seem to intend apologizing for the manner in which he conveys his sentiments to them; in which there is nothing strange or surprizing, nothing different from himself or other moral writers. The subject of his advice contains nothing so sublime or elevated, but that it may easily be comprehended by any person of ordinary understanding. Therefore ανθρωπινον λεγω cannot well signify here "I speak after the manner of men." Nor was the infirmity of their flesh any reason for his lowering his stile, or speaking in less exalted language than he otherwise would have done: since it is not a weakness of the understanding, but of the affections and will. The frailty of human nature, however, is a very good reason for indulgence, and for remitting that severity in commands or punishments, which would agree to beings of an higher order, and less limited in their powers of action. It is to be observed also, that ανθρωπινος, *human*, signifies "any thing that agrees to the nature of man." Calamities, and even crimes, are sometimes called *human*, when they do not exceed the usual lot and conduct of such beings as we are. Hence it comes to denote that which is *fair*, *equitable*, *candid*, or *indulgent*, as being suited to the state and character of frail imperfect mortals. I imagine therefore the Apostle's meaning to be this. "I impose no grievous penance upon you, nor invite you to accept any hard or
"unreasonable conditions. But it is a proposal which you have all the reason
"in the world to think well of and accept with joy." The thing that he presses upon them is, that as they had hitherto been the servants of sin, they would henceforth yield themselves to the service of righteousness, and obey its precepts. This he calls *human*, reasonable, easy; for the commandments of God are not

grievous,

grievous, and the yoke of righteouſneſs, which is Chriſt's yoke, is eaſy, and his burden light. The Apoſtle ſpeaks here according to the genius of the goſpel, and the nature of its great Author, and ſource of every good; who being beyond any other acquainted with our frame, ever treats us as *human* beings, and, in conſideration of our manifold weakneſs, is pleaſed to exact nothing from his offending creatures beſides their repentance and amendment. I think that this interpretation is preferable to any, which proceed upon a ſuppoſition that the Apoſtle is apologizing here either for his ſentiment or language, as any thing above their capacities. Or if we ſuppoſe him, with others, to ſignify by this phraſe, that in calling them ſlaves, under the ſubjection of a maſter, he had an alluſion to civil affairs and the diſtinctions of human life, what occaſion for telling them this? The figure was nothing uncommon, and the language of Philoſophy abounded with ſuch alluſions.

Ver. 20, 21, 22. "As long as you were ſervants to ſin, you behaved with "reſpect to righteouſneſs as if you had been free men, and under no obligations "to perform its commands. Be the ſame now with reſpect to ſin; diſpute all "its orders; and, being engaged in the ſervice of righteouſneſs, ſhew your-"ſelves to be free from every other maſter. For let me aſk you, what fruit "or advantage did you derive from a ſervice, the recollection of which can "excite nothing but indignation and remorſe? and muſt not death have been "the iſſue of ſuch a miſerable ſlavery? But now, being freed from ſin, nobly "perſiſt as you have begun, have your fruit unto holineſs, and look for the end "and reward of your ſervice, which is eternal life." I conſider this latter part as a continuance of his exhortation, and not affirmative, as it is rendered in our tranſlation.

Ver. 23. "For the wages and deſerved reward of ſin is death: but the gift "of God is eternal life, which generouſly, and of his own free purpoſe, he con-"fers upon us by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord." The language of the Apoſtle in this place is very obſervable. The *wages* of ſin is death, being its juſt deſert and reward; but eternal life is the *gift* of God, becauſe it is merited by no being. The word *merit*, which has occaſioned ſo much offence and diſpute, ſeems capable of two very different ſenſes. We merit favour and reward from others on whom we have conferred ſuperior benefits, or to whom we have done ſervices to which we were not bound in law or ſtrict juſtice. This may ſubſiſt between man and man, but cannot extend unto God, becauſe no man can be profitable to him, or do more than his duty. This kind of merit is what our Saviour ſpeaks of to his diſciples, *Luke* xvii. 10. "So ye alſo, when ye have done all "things which are commanded you, ſay, we are unprofitable ſervants: we "have done that which was our duty to do." For he does not ſuppoſe them to have offended and come ſhort of their duty, and for that reaſon unprofitable. But taking it for granted, that they had done *all things* which were commanded them, they were yet to ſay, "we are unprofitable ſervants." This is plain too from the inſtance of a maſter and his ſervant, which he introduces to make way for his application, v. 9. "Doth he thank that ſervant becauſe he hath done "thoſe things that were commanded him?" The ſervant had conferred no benefit, and had therefore deſerved no thanks, nor laid his maſter under any obligations. In this ſenſe the moſt innocent and exalted beings can merit nothing at the hands of God. For there can be no room for merit towards him,

who

who cannot be obliged, becauſe he ſtands in need of nothing; and to whom we cannot exceed in the meaſure of our ſervices, becauſe all that can be done is leſs than that which we owe to him. This ſhews us likewiſe the emptineſs of another pretence to merit, by works of ſupererogation as they are called, and which are ſuppoſed transferable to others. For derived dependent beings, let them have been as holy and perfect as can be imagined, and allow them to have excelled never ſo much in the duties of perfect or imperfect obligation, of piety, juſtice, or benevolence, muſt ſtill with reſpect to God, whoſe goodneſs cannot be outdone by any returns they make to him, be conſidered as unprofitable ſervants, who have done no more than was their duty.

But there is another idea of merit, by which moral agents, the ſubjects of rewards and puniſhments, and under a ſtate of government, behaving in all reſpects agreeable to the relations in which they ſtand, may be ſaid to deſerve well of their community and prince; an innocent ſubject to merit impunity and protection; and an eminently good one, honour and reward, though he may have conferred no perſonal obligations upon his governor. Thus God, as the moral governor of the univerſe, obſerving a difference in the characters of his ſubjects, conſiders them as entitled to or meriting a different treatment. But an offender, who has tranſgreſſed the laws of that ſociety in which he lives, loſes his claim of merit; and if he be pardoned, it is wholly through the favour of his prince, who therein exerciſes that diſcretionary power which is always ſuppoſed connected with the office of a chief magiſtrate or governor, for the benefit of the community. And that the offender preſerves his former ſtate and advantages undiminiſhed, is no longer of debt, but of grace. It is this laſt mentioned kind of merit to which St. Paul refers, where he ſays, " to him " that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him " who worketh not, &c. *Rom.* iv. 5. And he ſpeaks of both kinds where he ſays, " For if Abraham were juſtified by works, he hath whereof to glory; " but not before God." v. 2. Nevertheleſs there is room for the idea of different kinds of deſert amongſt imperfect and ſinful beings; provided it be always remembered that the pardon of their offences is the effect of mere grace and indulgence, as in its own nature it cannot be merited; but is freely beſtowed. For to attribute comparative good or ill deſert to ſuch beings, is only to ſay that there is a difference in their conduct, and that therefore they are the proper objects of a different retribution: which none can reaſonably deny. Nor can it ever be a ſufficient reaſon for confounding the degrees of good and evil, and repreſenting the immenſe variety of human characters as upon a level——I do not ſay as criminal, but as *equally* criminal and diſpleaſing to God.——It can never be a ſufficient reaſon for this, to ſay that we are all imperfect beings, and have come ſhort of our duty. Where the obligations diſcharged, or the offences committed, are not the ſame, there is an inequality of character; and where there is an inequality of character, there muſt be an inequality of moral deſert in the eye of every righteous governor. This may eaſily be granted; nor have we the leaſt reaſon to apprehend any bad conſequences from the conceſſion. For it will by no means follow, becauſe human beings are capable of good or ill deſert, that therefore the reward which the goſpel promiſes is not of grace but of debt. And it is plain the Apoſtle muſt have another view, in calling eternal life the *gift* of God; becauſe men, though they had never ſinned, could have

have no claims ſo extenſive as this, nor any pretence to look for everlaſting life as their right, or that which was due to them in ſtrict juſtice. And in beſtowing ſuch a gift upon us, God cannot be ſuppoſed to act as our moral governor, and in the way of retribution merely; but rather as our friend and father, who, with an affection truly parental, not only forgives our offences, but purpoſes to confer upon us an inheritance which is eternal in the heavens. It ſeems to be for this reaſon particularly that we are called the *children of God*; and we are ſaid by the promiſes of the goſpel to be made partakers of a divine nature, one conſiderable attribute of which is immortality of happineſs. So that the mercy of God, as diſplayed in the goſpel, may be referred to theſe three particulars; which are ſo many diſtinct proofs of his love to the human race, and riſe one above another in a ſenſible gradation; the free remiſſion of our ſins upon repentance, the acceptance of our imperfect obedience, and, which is the crown of all, the raiſing us to the poſſeſſion of immortal glories.

CHAP. VII.

THE Apoſtle having anſwered the objection which occurred to him, and confirmed the good reſolutions of his converts by further exhortations and arguments, proceeds now to prove and illuſtrate his former aſſertion, ch. vi. 14, "that they were not under the law, but under grace," that is, that they were in no danger of being called to account for their former offences, which they had forſaken, if they continued to obey the goſpel. Leſt I ſhould be thought to have aſſumed this point altogether without proof, I will here give the principal reaſons which incline me to prefer this interpretation. Firſt, the poſition itſelf, which is here enlarged upon, ſeems moſt capable of this ſenſe, in the connection in which it ſtands, as has been ſhewn in its place above. Secondly, the proof of their not being under the law is taken from their being dead to ſin, and grows out of his former reaſoning, that they were freed by the goſpel from its inſupportable tyranny. Now what foundation is there for arguing from their being dead to ſin to their being no longer under the law, beſides this, that a conſequence of forſaking ſin, by the divine goodneſs, is a remiſſion of the puniſhment we have deſerved? This remarkable ſimilarity between the turn of thought and expreſſion in both chapters, was my chief inducement to take in the preceding, as a proper introduction to the right underſtanding of this. Thirdly, it ſeems almoſt inconteſtably proved, that this was the Apoſtle's deſign, from the general concluſion which he draws at the beginning of the eighth chapter: "there is therefore now "no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the "fleſh but after the ſpirit." Fourthly, the ſentiment which has been embraced by ſo many learned men, that the Apoſtle is ſpeaking of a freedom from the Moſaic diſpenſation, and from all obligation to the obſervance of its burdenſome ceremonies, is very ill ſupported, and lies open to the following objections: 1. There does not appear to be any ſufficient foundation for that which they have aſſumed, that the Apoſtle's diſcourſe in this place is entirely to or of Jews: though it was, without doubt, intended to take them in together with others. On the contrary, the point of which he is here treating, and which is ſuppoſed to relate entirely to them, takes its riſe from the fourteenth verſe of the ſixth chapter,

chapter, and depends upon it; ſo that he muſt be conſidered as continuing his diſcourſe to the ſame perſons, and eſtabliſhing an aſſertion he had made concerning them. Now none of the commentators have ſuppoſed, nor is there any ground for ſuch a ſuppoſition, that the Apoſtle is ſpeaking in the former chapter to Jews alone, and not to Chriſtians in general. 2. The interpetation of theſe Criticks is built upon a ſuppoſition that the Apoſtle ſays one thing and means another; or, in other words, that he has uſed a figure of ſpeech, which nothing but downright neceſſity ſhould lead us to have recourſe to, in explaining an Author's meaning. And though it be the ſame thing, with reſpect to any man's being freed from a law, whether he be dead to the law, or the law itſelf abrogated, and ſo dead to him; yet they are certainly very different things in themſelves, and can never be conſidered as aſſertions of the ſame import. 3. But the Apoſtle has not only undertaken to prove, that the perſons to whom he was writing were not under the law, but that they were under grace, or entitled to forgiveneſs for their paſt offences. Now the repeal of a law does not of itſelf put the offender into a ſtate of grace, or a capacity of pleading his prince's pardon; ſince he may ſtill be called to account for offences committed againſt that law while it ſubſiſted. On the other hand, an amneſty, or act of grace for former offences, may take place, while the laws which have been broken are ſtill in full force and vigour. So that there ſeems to be no connection between theſe two points, the abolition of any law, and the ſubjects of it being under a ſtate of grace. 4. The reaſon which has been aſſigned for this very unuſual form of expreſſion, of *being dead to the law*, for the law itſelf being dead, or aboliſhed, is without foundation. There is not ſufficient ground for ſaying, that the Apoſtle was cautious of giving offence to the Jews, in aſſerting their freedom from the law of Moſes. Whoever reflects upon what he has ſaid in this and his other epiſtles, written to mixt aſſemblies of Jews and Gentiles; that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law; that he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; that circumciſion availeth nothing; that the ceremonies of the law are weak and beggarly elements; and that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; will ſee no cauſe to think that he was very fearful in this reſpect. Beſides, if, as has been commonly ſuppoſed, the epiſtle to the Hebrews be his, what reaſon was there for ſo much caution and diſguiſe in writing to Gentile Chriſtians; when in a letter ſent to the Jewiſh church, in a part of the world where the law was moſt rigidly obſerved, he tells them without the leaſt ambiguity, that there is a change of the law, chap. vii. 12. that the former commandment is diſannulled for the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof, v. 18. If he conformed himſelf, in different circumſtances, to the different ways of living both of Jews and Gentiles, this was not on account of his fears of either; but becauſe he uſed that right which he undoubtedly had of abridging his own liberty on certain occaſions for the good of others, and complying with cuſtoms which, though unneceſſary to ſalvation, were far from being immoral, in order to win men of different religions to the goſpel of Chriſt. But it does not appear that he ever taught the Jew, that their ceremonies and uſages were binding, or the Gentile that they were ſinful. His trimming, if it may be called ſo, never extended to his preaching. He had not one goſpel for Judea, another for Rome; one doctrine for the Synagogue, another for the Gentile aſſemblies. The man who could deny himſelf for the utility of others,

and conformed to their different modes of living in matters indifferent, taught openly at the ſame time, that theſe things were of no ſignification to the favour of God; that neither the neglect or obſervance of them can recommend us to him, but faith, righteouſneſs, and benevolence. A circumſtance which is abſolutely inconſiſtent with the character of a trimmer, who ſeeks to gain the favour of two parties, by humouring each of them in turn, and teaching one thing to one ſet of people, and the very contrary perhaps to another. And we ſee that his honeſty and openneſs, in publiſhing ſuch doctrines, expoſed him continually to the perſecution and malice of ſuch as were zealous of the law. If it ſhould be ſaid, that this condeſcenſion, in complying with indifferent cuſtoms, was the very thing for which he blamed St. Peter, who taught no other doctrine than what St. Paul himſelf taught, but withdrew from the Gentiles, with whom he had converſed freely, upon the arrival of certain Jews, for fear of giving offence to theſe new comers: I anſwer that the two caſes appear to me very different. St. Peter, according to the account of his brother Apoſtle, was ſurprized into a temporary diſſimulation, which muſt ever be hurtful to the cauſe of truth and rational religion. If in the houſe or company of a Jew, I abſtain from particular meats and other uſages which he thinks wrong, to avoid a needleſs inſult upon his prejudices, while I teach him that theſe things are nothing in themſelves; and in the houſe or company of a Gentile, uſe a more free diet and manner of living, knowing all theſe things to be indifferent, and teaching him the ſame doctrine; as I uſe every honeſt method to guard againſt offences, ſo I do nothing that is to be condemned, or likely to miſlead either. But if, while I am in the houſe of the Gentile, my Jewiſh friend ſhould enter, and I thereupon quit my former free behaviour; I do that for which there can be no reaſon of prudence, and by which further I betray an unbecoming fear, and muſt appear to both to condemn that doctrine which I formerly taught, that thoſe things are altogether indifferent. I ceaſe too to act upon my own principle of avoiding to give offence; becauſe, whereas neither of them would have juſt cauſe to be offended, if I had acted conſiſtently, they muſt now both of them neceſſarily be offended with my cowardly behaviour. And ſuppoſing it not eaſy to avoid giving offence to one or the other in theſe circumſtances, ſurely it is much better to run the riſk of this while I maintain an open uniform behaviour and undiſguiſed to each, than to loſe both in this dilemma, and fix upon myſelf the brand of inconſtancy or diſſimulation.

But I return from this digreſſion, into which I was led for the ſake of illuſtrating the principles upon which the Apoſtle acted in his behaviour to Jews and Gentiles, and ſhewing that it did not in the leaſt affect his doctrine, which was one and the ſame to both. It will be aſked, Does the Apoſtle ſpeak here of the law of Moſes merely, or more generally of the law of nature? I anſwer, though it be probable that he has a more particular reference to the law of Moſes, as being the only or at leaſt the principal revealed law before the time of Chriſt, yet he ſpeaks of it not as the civil municipal law of any particular diſtrict of the globe, but as far as its precepts and conſtitutions were known and binding upon the conſciences of all mankind; or, in other words, as far as it was the univerſal law of God and nature. But it muſt be carefully obſerved, that he ſpeaks of their not being under the law in no other ſenſe, than as they were delivered from its condemnation by dying to ſin and riſing to holineſs. The laws of God

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were ſtill binding upon their conduct as moral agents; nor did the goſpel deliver them from any obligations, which they were before under as rational beings, but taught and enforced every precept of moral righteouſneſs. Nor is it to be wondered at, that the Apoſtle calls this freedom from condemnation, or the pardon they had received by the goſpel for their former ſins, a not being under the law; ſince he ſpeaks much in the ſame manner, 1 *Tim.* i. 9. "knowing this, that the law is not made for the righteous, but for ſinners and diſobedient," of all kinds, who are the ſubjects of its threatenings and denunciations. Alſo *Gal.* v. 18. "But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under "the law." To be led by the Spirit is evidently to be governed by the laws of the goſpel and of our own mind; and ſuch are not under the law, nor ſubject to its condemnation, becauſe the law cannot take hold of them. And after telling us, v. 22. what are the fruits of the Spirit, which comprehend univerſal goodneſs, he adds, "againſt ſuch there is no law," which fully explains his meaning. Therefore ſuch as are reformed by the goſpel, are the men who are not under the law, but under grace. And for this reaſon we ſhall find, that the law of condemnation is conſidered as the law of the former huſband, or the fleſh, in the ſimilitude made uſe of by the Apoſtle, coeval with him and having us under it during his life: though in reality the law of God is ever the ſame, and is not altered by the conduct of men, made at one time of their life and abrogated at another; but is one and the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.

His argument is evidently of the ſame kind with that in the former chapter, by which he deters them from ſin, and encourages them to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called: and more is meant in both than ſeems to be expreſſed. For as there, after telling them that they have died to ſin in their baptiſm and were buried with Chriſt, he leaves them to recollect the weight of thoſe obligations under which they were laid, by the profeſſion of the goſpel, to forſake ſin and practice univerſal virtue: ſo here, when, to fortify their minds in the hope of divine mercy, he tells them that the law has dominion over a man only while he lives, but cannot take cognizance of his conduct after death, and that they are dead to the law, he would have them to underſtand that they have eſcaped its ſentence and withdrawn themſelves from puniſhment, by bidding farewell to the vanities of their former life, which he figuratively calls their dying to ſin. For thus becoming new creatures, inſtead of entertaining apprehenſions of the divine juſtice and diſpleaſure, they had all the reaſon in the world to look for his favour and compaſſion, of which they were made fit ſubjects, by breaking off their ſins and turning unto God.

Ver. 1. "I have ſaid that ſin ſhall not have dominion over you, to involve "you in its condemnation, provided you have forſaken it for ever: becauſe "you are then become dead to it, being no longer under its law; and the ſen"tence which was paſt upon you as ſinners is repealed, and you are received "into a ſtate of favour with God. I will appeal to your own reaſon and ſenti"ments of things, for the juſtice of this aſſertion; that you may take all "poſſible encouragement to continue in that newneſs of life which you have "ſo well begun. Do you not know, my brethren; for I ſpeak to thoſe who "are well acquainted with the nature of a law; that the law has power over "a man, and binds him by its authority, only as long as he lives?" The Apoſtle ſays, γινωσκουσι γαρ νομον λαλω without the article, which is, "I ſpeak

" to them that underſtand law, or a law." It cannot be argued therefore with certainty from this paſſage, that he is addreſſing himſelf wholly to the Jews. The Romans were commonly as well acquainted with the nature of a law as the Jews. And his obſervation is not particularly applicable to the law of Moſes, but is equally true of laws in general.

For underſtanding the Apoſtle's view here, it is neceſſary to keep in mind, that he takes advantage of what he had been ſaying above, namely, that they were dead to ſin by their Chriſtian obligations, and proceeds to ſhew, that if they had in reality died to ſin, they were alſo delivered from its puniſhment. It is the ſame as if he had ſaid, " the laws of God do not condemn the man, but the " ſinner; when therefore the man ceaſes to be the ſinner, or becomes dead to ſin, " he ceaſes to be liable to the condemnation of ſin." To argue from a freedom from the dominion and power of ſin, to a freedom from its condemnation, is ſufficiently authorized, not only by the tenour of the goſpel, but by many paſſages of the Old Teſtament, particularly the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel.

Ver. 2. " I will employ another conſideration, and illuſtrate the point I have " in view by a compariſon taken from the affairs of civil life. A married " woman is bound by the law to her huſband, and obliged to receive his " commands, and ſhare his fortunes, no longer than during the term of his " life." The Apoſtle is not here proving what he had ſaid in the former verſe, " that laws do not bind the dead," which is too ſelf-evident to need any confirmation. The γαρ therefore muſt be conſidered as expletive, or only referring to his general argument. This is a new conſideration, which he is urging to ſhew, that, having ceaſed to be ſinners, they are free from any connection or concern with ſin. It is not probable to me, that the Apoſtle compares the law to an huſband, and our ſubjection under it to a marriage contract, which continues in force during the life of either of the parties. Some Criticks have been led into this miſtake, for want of attending to the ſpirit and ſcope of this figurative language. Who then is the Huſband ſpoken of? I anſwer, Sin or the Fleſh, whom the Apoſtle had before characterized as the Lord or Maſter, and here introduces under a new title as the *Huſband* of ſinners; who, in the metaphorical ſtile, may properly be repreſented either as enſlaved or wedded to vice. It is obſervable alſo that the Hebrew word, which ſignifies *to have dominion*, ſignifies at the ſame time to *marry* or *become a huſband*; and a Huſband in that language is called the *Lord of a woman*. Hence what we render *I am married unto you*, Jer. iii. 14. the Seventy tranſlate κατα κυριευσω υμων, *I will have dominion over you*. This remarkable correſpondence between the terms probably ſuggeſted to the Apoſtle the idea of a marriage contract. Now the ſimilitude between the contract of a huſband and wife, and that of ſin and ſinners, conſiſts in this, that as long as ſin lives and reigns in the heart we continue under its ſentence or law, and nothing but the death or total extinction of one of the parties, either of ſin or the ſinner, can diſſolve the connection. " But if her " huſband die, ſhe is releaſed from the obligation."

Ver. 3. " So then ſhe is called an adultereſs, if ſhe enter into engagements " with another man, while her huſband is alive. But if he die, the contract " is of courſe diſſolved, and ſhe is no longer conſidered as an adultereſs, though " ſhe ſhould enter into the bonds of marriage with another." A compariſon is not always to be ſtrained as far as ever it will go. Yet even here we may diſcover a ſuffi-

a ſufficient reſemblance between the two caſes. For a man can no more be contracted to Chriſt and Sin at the ſame time, than he can ſerve two maſters, God and Mammon.

Ver. 4. "For which reaſon, my brethren, you alſo have been, as I may ſay, "put to death with the body of Chriſt, and are become dead to the law and "power of your former ſtate, that, dying to ſin and riſing to holineſs, you "might be engaged to another, namely, to him who is raiſed from the dead, "and that we might henceforth bring forth fruit unto God." Θανατοω ſignifies to *ſlay* or *put to death*, and in the paſſive to be ſlain. To be put to death by or with the body of Chriſt, is the ſame thing with being crucified with Chriſt. See the former chapter, v. 6. *Gal.* ii. 20. v. 24. vi. 14. Our engagements to the ſervice of Chriſt, are repreſented under the notion of a matrimonial contract; according to the frequent uſe of thoſe images in the prophetick writings, from whence the Apoſtle borrows it. Some Criticks have thought that the Apoſtle ſpeaks in this verſe of the death or abrogation of the Moſaic law, and that his compariſon neceſſarily leads to this concluſion; becauſe it is the death of the huſband, and not of the wife, that muſt make way for *her* ſecond marriage: but that out of regard to the Jews, and for fear of irritating them too much, he ſpeaks leſs openly than he otherwiſe would have done, and by a grammatical figure ſays "that they are dead to the law," in the room of ſaying that "the "law is dead to them." I grant it to be very true, as is urged, that the death of the huſband, and not that of the wife, precedes her entering into a new contract. And we ought to reaſon in this manner, if the Apoſtle were ſpeaking of a real and not of a figurative death. All that his compariſon ſeems intended to conclude is, that one of the parties ſhould die, and the contract be thereby diſſolved: and it needs to be preſſed no farther, ſince it is certain that, in the former chapter, the ſame perſons who are ſaid to be dead unto ſin, are deſcribed as alive to Chriſt and to God. But there may be another reaſon given why the Apoſtle ſays that "*we* are become dead to the law, that *we* might be married "to him who is raiſed from the dead," by which the ſtrictneſs and propriety of the figure is altogether preſerved. It is plain that the Apoſtle conſiders the ſinner as compounded of two parts, the fleſh and the ſpirit, or the appetites and the mind, the firſt of which anſwers in his compariſon to the maſter or huſband, the latter to the wife or the ſlave, and that he ſpeaks of both in the firſt perſon. Thus, ver. 18. "I know that in *me*, that is, in my fleſh," and 22. "I delight "in the law of God, after the inward man." Though we ſhould allow therefore that he does not ſpeak very elegantly, he does at leaſt in a manner ſufficiently intelligible. And the ſentiment of theſe three verſes is plainly this: "You have "been formerly under engagements to Sin, to whom the law had bound you, "as to the huſband of your choice, in a connection which nothing but the death "of one of the parties could diſſolve; neither, while you were under the power "of Sin, was it lawful or poſſible that you ſhould be united to Chriſt as part "of the Church, which may figuratively be called his ſpouſe. For which reaſon "you have been crucified with Chriſt, that the body of Sin, which was the "former huſband, being deſtroyed, you might be freed from thoſe fatal en-"gagements, and be joined to him who is riſen from the dead, and with whom "you have riſen to newneſs of life." The alteration then, which Chriſtianity has made, is not directly in the law under which we ſerve; but firſt in the

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characters of men, and ſo by conſequence in the law. For the law of God is, with reſpect to ſinners, a law of condemnation and death. When they forſake their ſins and turn to God, they become dead to the law, and, through the mercy of God, receive life and peace. There are two ways, by which a ſinner becomes dead to the law, either by breaking off his ſins, or by ſuffering the puniſhment due to them. The firſt of theſe is the deſtruction or death of Sin, the latter of the Sinner. It is the former only that the Apoſtle can be ſuppoſed to ſpeak of here, though poſſibly with ſome alluſion to the latter. For as death is the puniſhment of ſin, when he tells them that they had been put to death in or with reſpect to the law, though he ſpeaks only of a metaphorical death, he would have them to conclude, that by dying thus they were fully diſcharged from the law, and had no more to fear.

Ver. 5. " For when we were in the fleſh, the ſinful affections (which are " made ſo by the law) were alive and active in our members, to bring forth " fruit unto death." Mr. Locke and Dr. Taylor would render τα δια τυ νομυ, *which were during or notwithſtanding the law*; ſo as to contain a tacit inſinuation of the imperfection of the law of Moſes, which could not reform or take away the ſins of men. Theſe judicious writers ſaw very well, the neceſſity of clearing a divine law from the charge of encouraging wickedneſs. For to aſcribe the motions of ſin directly to the law of God as their origin, is not more impious than it is nonſenſical. And to account for this afterward by the proneneſs there is in man to break through the reſtraint of a law, though ever ſo juſt, uſeful, and agreeable, merely becauſe it is a law and ſomething commanded, is, to ſay the leaſt, highly ridiculous. However I am not ſatisfied with their interpretation for the following reaſons. The Apoſtle, as was hinted above, ſeems ſpeaking not of the ceſſation of the law, but of the ceſſation and deſtruction of ſin, by which men are delivered from the ſentence of the law. And beſides, the return in the next verſe diſappoints us, and deceives the expectation we ſhould naturally form from reading the foregoing, if we underſtood it in the manner theſe learned Criticks ſuppoſe. For when he has been ſaying that " ſin ſubſiſted notwithſtanding the law," the contraſt which we look for in the next ſentence for the honour of the goſpel is, " but now we are de- " livered from *ſin*, the law dying, or we dying to the law, under which we " were held." Otherwiſe the remark ſeems introduced for no reaſon, and we miſs that pointed ſenſe which the Apoſtle's arguments ſo frequently contain.

I acknowledge that it is not eaſy to render the paſſage in ſuch a manner as entirely to remedy this defect. " The affections of ſins which fall under the " cognizance and ſentence of the law," and therefore ſubject us to puniſhment, would have been pertinent to the Apoſtle's purpoſe. But the words τα δια τυ νομυ will hardly bear that ſignification. Perhaps τα παθηματα των αμαρτιων τα ſup. οντα, ſc. παθηματα των αμαρτιων, δια τυ νομυ, that is, " the ſinful " affections which are ſuch, or made ſo, by the law," which ſenſe I have given above, might be tolerated. It is obſervable that Origen, in his dialogue againſt the Marcionites, reads δια της σαρκος, " by the fleſh," inſtead of " by the law." But though this reading entirely removes the imputation upon the law of God, it leaves the ſenſe as defective as ever. For the return which is made in the next verſe ſuppoſes the law to have been mentioned in this: nor does the mention of it come with the leaſt impropriety, where he is ſpeaking of the penal effects

of ſin. As far as I can judge, after much conſideration, the article τα, which connects δια του νομου with παθηματα των αμαρτιων, diſturbs the ſenſe, and occaſions all this perplexity. For without it we have a clear unexceptionable aſſertion: "For when we were in the fleſh, the affections of ſins, by means of the "law, wrought in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." He here aſſigns to the law the part which it properly ſuſtains, of a judge and condemner. For ſin exiſts without and diſtinct from the law; but it is by means of the law that it brings forth fruit unto death; or, in other words, deſtroys us. That this, or ſomething like it, was intended by the Apoſtle, will hardly bear a diſpute. For it is evident, from his ſaying "but now we are delivered from the "law," that he had been ſpeaking of the law as ſome way againſt us, either directly or indirectly an occaſion of hurt to us. But to aſcribe the exiſtence of ſin to the law of God inciting and irritating it, muſt be quite out of the queſtion—I do not ſay with an inſpired writer, but with any writer of common ſenſe. He muſt therefore ſpeak of it as a puniſher and avenger. And this probably gave riſe to the objections againſt the law, and his vindications of it, which follow immediately and turn upon this topic. The "being in the fleſh," mentioned at the beginning of the verſe, is characteriſtic of ſinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, and only of ſinners under either of thoſe ſtates. And whereas he deſcribes good Chriſtians as dead to ſin, ſo there ſeems a deſigned ambiguity in the phraſe of "being in the fleſh," which denotes either "being alive," or "being under the dominion of ſin."

Ver. 6. "But now we are freed from the law under which we were held, and "from the ſentence which threatened us, by dying to ſin: ſo that we ſerve "with a new ſpirit, and not according to the form of an antiquated contract." Αποθανοντες, or *we dying*, which is the reading of moſt of the manuſcripts, anſwers beſt to what he ſays in the former verſe, "while we were in the fleſh." If we read αποθανοντος in the genitive with our tranſlators, we muſt ſupply either τυτυ or ανδρος or σωματος, and render it "he, or the huſband dying, "by whom we were held in ſubjection. Γραμμα, which we tranſlate the *letter*, denotes the writing or contract ſuppoſed to be made between ſin and ſinners, or that condition under which men ſerved ſin; for the wages of ſin are death. This covenant the Apoſtle conſiders as being ſet aſide or antiquated, by their ſubmitting to the Chriſtian diſpenſation; ſo that it had no power over them, if they continued faithful to their new engagements.

Ver. 7. "What then, muſt we conclude, that the law is ſin? or that ſin "and the law are words of the ſame ſignification? becauſe I ſay, that being "delivered from the power of ſin, we are at the ſame time freed from the law "and its ſentence. No, by no means. So far from it, that I am indebted to "the law for a more perfect knowledge of ſin and its evil tendency. For I had "not known the inſidious, deſtructive quality of which it is poſſeſt, but by "means of a law. I had not known, for inſtance, the deceitful nature of luſt, "unleſs it had been prohibited by a law." The Apoſtle here vindicates the divine law, not from being acceſſory to the crimes of men (for I believe it never entered into his thoughts, that ſuch an objection could be made to it) but from any injuſtice in inflicting that puniſhment, which their offences have deſerved. I admire the turn of that man's genius, who can infer from what is ſaid here, that we ſhould never have felt any evil deſires, if it had not been for the prohibitions.

hibitions of the law. The firſt and moſt obvious advantage of a promulgated law is, that it acquaints us with whatever is wrong and hurtful to us, and puts us upon our guard againſt it. But the Apoſtle ſeems to mean ſomething more by the knowledge of ſin, than the bare knowledge of the difference between good and evil; which is not derived to us from any external law, but written on the heart. Good and evil therefore being antecedent to a law, the law commands what is good and forbids evil, under the ſanctions of rewards and puniſhments. Men coming into ſuch a ſtate, and continuing to do evil notwithſtanding the injunctions and prohibitions of the law, come to know ſin in the Apoſtle's ſenſe; that is, as an inſidious deſtroyer, exceeding ſinful, and working death by means of a law that is perfectly juſt and good.

Αλλα, *but*, in this verſe, does not imply any exception to what he has ſaid, or conceſſion to the diſcredit of the law, that though it be not ſin itſelf, yet at leaſt we ſhould never have known ſin without it; which probably moſt readers imagine. The Apoſtle argues *a fortiori*, that the law is not ſin, becauſe it acquaints us with the true nature of ſin, and puts us upon our guard againſt it; for which reaſon it cannot be evil, nor in league with evil. Αλλα therefore ſhould have been rendered *nay, ſo far from it*, inſtead of *but*. That this particle has ſuch ſignification in Greek authors is inconteſtable. See *Plutarch in Pericles*, Vol. I. p. 380. l. 5. Alſo *The life of Homer in Gale*. Op. Myth. p. 352. l. 10.

Ver. 8, 9, 10, 11. "But ſin, having gotten ſo fair an handle for effecting "my ruin by means of the commandment given, wrought in me all evil de- "ſires (for it is to be obſerved, that without a law ſin is dead, or impotent to "deſtroy. And I had lived at length, and entirely eſcaped his deſtructive arti- "fices, had it not been for a law condemning my conduct and ſubjecting me "to death. But the commandment taking place, ſin revived, and I in conſe- "quence died. And the commandment which was ordained with an intent "that he who did thoſe things ſhould live in them, ended in my death through "the deceitfulneſs of ſin. For, as I ſaid before, ſin having gotten an occaſion "of hurting me by means of the commandment, firſt deceived me with his own "inſinuations in order to effect my deſtruction) and then by the commandment "ſlew me." The Apoſtle goes on to ſhew how ſin, which he cloaths with a perſonal character, contrives to circumvent and deſtroy. His exiſtence is not owing to a divine law, which as far as poſſible reſtrains and corrects every evil. Nor is his power over men, to lead them captive at will, increaſed, but on the contrary diminiſhed, by ſuch a law. And in the moſt corrupted ages of the world, laws have a natural tendency to leſſen the number and prevalence of crimes. The occaſion therefore which ſin takes from the promulgation of a law is not to tempt men to evil, which it does more effectually where there are no laws to reſtrain and puniſh offenders, but to deſtroy them in the commiſſion of it. This is plain from the Apoſtle's diſcourſe, if we attend to it. For he does not finiſh his ſentence where he ſays that "ſin wrought concupiſcence," but, leaving it imperfect, he ſhews, by way of parentheſis, how ſin had ſuch an occaſion by means of the law, and reſumes it again at the eleventh verſe, with a repetition of what he had ſaid before.

Though the Apoſtle makes a ſuppoſition of what would have been the caſe, had mankind ever been without a law; it does not appear that he thought them to have been ſo in fact. There is no reaſon to imagine from what he has ſaid,

or upon any other foundation, that men at any time, or in any part of the world, were without law to God. And he hints in another part of his epiſtle, that though the law of Moſes did not extend to the whole globe, yet thoſe who were deprived of the advantage of an external law, were not without ſome rule of conduct. He is therefore to be interpreted agreeably to this ſentiment, as I have done it above. And the beginning of the ninth verſe may very well be underſtood conditionally; for it is obſerved by Grammarians, that the conditional particle αν is ſometimes deficient, and muſt be ſupplied where the ſenſe and connection of any paſſage requires it. And there is as much reaſon for rendering εγω δε εζων χωρις νομου ποτε, "and I had lived at length had it not "been for a law," as for rendering ουκ εγνων την αμαρτιαν, v. 7. "I had not "known ſin."

Ver. 12. "Wherefore, notwithſtanding the condemnation and death of of-"fenders, the law is holy, juſt, and good; moſt pure in its own nature, and "given with the moſt benevolent intentions to the human race."

Ver. 13. "Can it be then, ſome one will aſk, that a thing ſo good in itſelf, "ſhould be the occaſion of my deſtruction? No, your deſtruction can never "be imputed to the law, but only to ſin. So that, to the eternal diſgrace of "human folly and wickedneſs, it may appear, that the true ends of the law, "which were the improvement and happineſs of mankind, have been perverted; "ſin having produced death, by means of the beſt thing in the world. And "thus, by means of the commandment, it is ſhewn in the moſt deteſtable colours, "being ſeen to incite men to the worſt of conduct, and hurry them on to their "own ruin, in ſpite of the ſalutary precepts and admonitions of a divine law." The Apoſtle vindicates the divine law, upon the ſame principles by which the laws of all wiſe and well conſtituted ſtates, ordaining the puniſhments of offenders, are to be vindicated, namely, that they only define the nature and extent of crimes (for by the law is the knowledge of ſin) and affix penalties to the commiſſion of them for the preſervation and good order of ſociety, leaving men the uſe of their powers in all freedom, and abridging none, till they actually expoſe themſelves to the laſh of juſtice by offences, to which laws are no ways acceſſory. So then the law is juſt and good, free from any blame on account of offenders and the death which they bring upon themſelves. But you will allow me, ſuppoſe a criminal in any ſtate to ſay, that what is good in itſelf is at leaſt become death to me, and is therefore occaſionally a great evil. "No, "far from it," replies an advocate for laws and government. "It is ſin, or "your crimes which become death to you. And obſerve, that ſin has brought "death upon you by means of a thing that is ſimply and univerſally good, "which cannot but ſhew in a ſtrong light the odiouſneſs of this principle, "that can ſo far pervert the nature of things as to bring evil out of good. "The laws made to puniſh crimes do not at all hinder offenders from being "conſidered as their own deſtroyers; and in fact their guilt is greatly heightened "by ſuch a contempt of the rules of government, and of all the ſanctions "which have been found out to deter men from wickedneſs. So that ſin is "become, by the promulgation of the law, exceeding ſinful, when it breaks "through every reſtraint of duty or intereſt, and turns the greateſt benefits "which mankind can receive from their fellow beings, or from heaven itſelf,

" good and ſalutary laws, to the detriment and ruin of men whom he deceives."
Thus we have a reaſonable apology for laws human and divine.

Ver. 14. " For we know that the law is ſpiritual, directly oppoſed to the " paſſions and exceſſes of evil men. But every habitual offender, every man " who lives in the breach of the laws of God and right reaſon, is under the " dominion of the fleſh, ſold and delivered to the ſervitude of ſin, and, having " loſt the government of himſelf, is enſlaved to thoſe appetites which every " reaſonable being ought to have under his command.

Ver. 15. " For what further proof can we deſire, that wicked men are held " under a moſt ſevere and bitter ſervitude, than to compare their conduct with " the ſentiments and reflections of their own minds? For thus, if he ever al- " lows himſelf to think, will the Sinner ſay within himſelf, The thing which " I am doing I cannot approve. Nor do I follow my own will and judgment " in my conduct, but am condemned to do that which I hate. But if I act " thus wickedly againſt my better inclinations, I aſſent to the goodneſs and " juſtice of the law of God, which is ſuch as my mind and conſcience entirely " approve. Can any thing be plainer, then, from all this, than that I am a " wretched ſlave? that I am not the maſter of my own actions, but under the " tyranny of an enemy, who has ſeized my affections and paſſions?

Ver. 18. " I perceive then that my fleſh is not the ſeat of Good: for to will " and deſire good is ready enough, nay I cannot avoid it, as it is the act of my " nobler mind; but, whilſt I am thus under the dominion of appetite, I find " no way of effecting my virtuous purpoſes.

Ver. 19. " But like an unhappy creature, who has exchanged his liberty for " a cruel inſupportable bondage, I do not perform thoſe good actions which " I will and approve, but the evil which I wiſh to avoid.

Ver. 20. " But if I act thus againſt my better judgment and choice, it is " certain that I am not free, but the ſlave of ſin, fulfilling thoſe hard com- " mands which it enjoins me.

Ver. 21. " I find then a law impoſed upon me by another maſter, becauſe " when I wiſh to do good, evil is appointed to me.

" Ver. 22. " For I delight in the law of God with my judgment and con- " ſcience, which make up the inward man. But I ſee that there is a law in " my members, which militates againſt the law of my underſtanding, and cap- " tivates me to the law of ſin, which ariſes from the inferior part of my nature, " and has gained an aſcendency over the whole man.

Ver. 23. Wretch that I am! who will deliver me from this miſerable ſlavery " of the body, this death with which I am encompaſſed? What propitious " power will bring back the eaſe and tranquillity of my mind, and reſtore me " to that ſtate of freedom and independence which I have loſt?"

It is much debated by different commentators, whom the Apoſtle intends to perſonate in this ſoliloquy, and whether he ſpeaks in the character of a Saint or a Sinner. How widely different! Can the ſame language then agree to both? Let us examine further into the merits of this cauſe. It is urged by thoſe who maintain the former, namely, that the Apoſtle ſpeaks in his own perſon and the perſon of other good men; that there is in the beſt and moſt reformed natures, a perpetual ſtruggle between the fleſh and the ſpirit, the appetites and nobler mind, in which the firſt is ſometimes ſuperior, through the infirmity

of

of human beings; that the Apoſtle intends to deſcribe this ſtruggle, and, in purſuance of his deſign, repreſents the ſincerely good man, as complaining of the hardſhips of his warfare, lamenting his imperfect virtue, together with the faults into which he is occaſionally ſurprized, notwithſtanding his vigilance and reſolution; that this ſenſibility does not at all agree to the habitual ſinner, becauſe he is a volunteer in wickedneſs, and offends without check or reluctance; that the Apoſtle uſes theſe ſtrong expreſſions of being "ſold under ſin," "doing the evil which he would not," and "neglecting the good which he wiſhes "to do," becauſe none are more ſenſible of their failings, or more ſevere in their ſelf-reproaches on account of them, than the men who have made ſome progreſs in righteouſneſs and goodneſs. Theſe conſiderations will undoubtedly deſerve attention in explaining the paſſage before us. Allowing them then their due weight, let us attend to what may be ſaid on behalf of the other interpretation.

It is aſſerted that men do not offend becauſe they have loſt the diſtinctions of right and wrong, or are without an inclination to do good and ceaſe from evil; but becauſe their paſſions have maſtered their judgment, prevailing over the remonſtrances of conſcience and thoſe inclinations to right action which are diſcernible in the moſt corrupt and vicious: that it is not true that the generality of wicked men, if any, offend without check and reluctance, for we may often hear ſome of the moſt abandoned ſeverely reproaching themſelves, expreſſing the higheſt deteſtation of their conduct, and wiſhing to do better; and it is probable that much more paſſes within their own minds, than they chuſe at all times to have others acquainted with: that if too much is ſaid to be put into the mouth of a wicked man, it is ſurely too much for a good man even to ſay of himſelf; who, if he has ever occaſion to ſpeak of his character, and that to which he has already attained (which it is to be preſumed will be as ſeldom as poſſible, and never by way of boaſting or inſolent compariſon with others) notwithſtanding his many imperfections, cannot conſiſtently do it in terms which will agree only to the moſt abandoned. Every one muſt ſee that there is a great deal of difference between pretending to be juſt before God, or free from faults, and charging ourſelves with a ſubjection to ſin which, if real, is inconſiſtent with goſpel righteouſneſs, and that ſincerity which is inſeparable from the Chriſtian character. See *Gal.* v. 24. *Rom.* viii. 13. St. Paul does not call himſelf "the chief of ſinners," however we underſtand that phraſe, in reſpect of what he had been ſince his converſion to Chriſtianity, nor does he ſpeak of himſelf as carnal, walking after the fleſh, enſlaved to ſin, doing all manner of evil inſtead of good, but the contrary. See *Gal.* ii. 20. 2 *Cor.* vii. 2. and x. 2, 3. *Phil.* iii. 17. And, which is a ſtrong confirmation of the Apoſtle's deſign in this paſſage, and proves that he meant to deſcribe the ſtate of an habitual ſinner, and not of an imperfectly righteous man, the ſame perſon, who in this chapter laments his wretched ſervitude, is in the next ſuppoſed to be delivered by the goſpel, ſet free from the law of ſin, and, according to the ſcripture language, created anew unto good works in Chriſt Jeſus, the body of ſin being deſtroyed, and his dominion ceaſed, ſo that the righteouſneſs of the law is fulfilled in or by him, walking not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit. By which it is clear, that he conſiders good men as under a different ſtate and law from that of the lamenting ſinner; not ſimply wiſhing to do good and flee

evil, but actually doing that which they approve, and avoiding those things which are justly odious to every reasonable mind; as led by the Spirit of God, and following the genuine dictates of conscience and a divine revelation, by which they become the heirs of a nobler life, and escape the condemnation of such as are captivated under the law of sin and death.

Perhaps it will contribute something to the illustration of this subject to shew, that the Apostle's argument is exactly of the same kind with that, which some heathen philosophers, particularly the Stoics, made use of, to prove that every vicious man is a slave. Thus Epictetus, in his discourse concerning liberty, as we find it in Arrian, cap. i. lib. 4. p. 530. ed. Upton. Ελευθερος εστιν ο ζων ως βελεται, κ. τ. λ. "He is a free man, who lives just as he wishes to live; "who is superior to all necessity and compulsion; whose actions are unre- "strained; who is so happy in his desires and aversions, as ever to attain the "thing which he seeks, and to avoid that which he hates. Who then wills "or desires to live in a state of sin? No man. Who wills to live under the "power of grief, terror, envy, a foolish softness of mind, disappointed of "every thing he desires, and continually pestered with that which he hates? "No man. But do we see any bad man who is not subject to these passions? "None. Then we cannot say that a bad man is free. If any one who has "been twice consul should hear this, and you afterward add, This to be sure "does not relate to you, Sir, he will pardon it: but if you speak the truth, "and tell him that he is no better than the poor creatures who have been sold "over and over again in the market, what can you expect but to be chastised "for your saucineſs? How can I be a slave? he will say: my father and mo- "ther were both free, and never in bondage to any man. Nay more, I am "a senator, a friend of Cæsar, of consular dignity, and have many slaves of "my own. But hark ye, good Mr. Senator, perhaps your father and mother, "and your whole generation were slaves in the same sense as you are. And "allow them to have been ever so free, what is that to your case? What does "it signify that they were of noble, generous minds, if you are ignoble? "that they were intrepid, if you are an infamous coward? or that they were "temperate and frugal, while you are a debauched, worthless, rake? But how "does all this make me a slave? he replies. How! the acting against your "inclination and choice, and under a perpetual constraint, groaning and la- "menting all the while, do not these things constitute the very essence of "slavery?" See also p. 73. and 171. And p. 342. we have in part the very words of the Apostle, "All wrong conduct supposes some errors of the mind. "For as a sinner does not will to offend or err, but to pursue his real happi- "ness; it is plain that he does not do the thing that he would. What does a "thief intend, for instance, but to pursue his own advantage? If therefore "fraud and injustice be hurtful to him, and inconsistent with his true interest, "he does not do that which he wills?" And a little lower, "But the man who "is intelligent and capable of exhorting and convincing, will be able to demon- "strate his mistake, and clearly shew him how he does not that *which he wills* "*to do*, but does that *which he wills not*." Though it is to be observed that in this passage he is speaking of wrong pursuits, as they arise from men's igno- rance of the true good, and not from evil affection. Cicero also in his fifth pa- radox, where he undertakes to prove that only the wise man is free, and that

every

every fool is a ſlave, ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe. "For what is liberty? The "power of living according to your own will. Who then lives, as he wills to "live, but he who follows rectitude, who takes pleaſure in his duty, and "whoſe conduct is governed by reaſon and prudence? Who obeys the laws "of his country, not through fear, but becauſe he judges it to be beſt and "moſt ſalutary; who ſays nothing, does nothing, in fine, thinks nothing, but "freely and without reſtraint; all whoſe deſigns and actions proceed from "himſelf, and are referred to the ſame ſource, nor is there any thing that has "more weight with him than his own inclination and judgment. But it is the "wiſe man alone who does nothing unwillingly, nothing through conſtraint "or neceſſity impoſed on him by others. Therefore all the wicked are ſlaves." Thus Plato in his republics, lib. ix. p. 244. l. 2. "If then, as we ſay, a man "reſembles a commonwealth, muſt not the ſame things take place in him, as "in the ſtate to which he reſembles? And his mind groan beneath the load of "ſlavery and oppreſſion, while the beſt and nobleſt parts of him are enſlaved, "and the worſt and moſt violent appetites lord it over him? Undoubtedly. "Would you ſay then that ſuch a mind as this is free, or in ſervitude? In "ſervitude, moſt certainly. Now you will grant that a ſtate enſlaved to the "will of a deſpotic tyrant, has not the power of acting as it chuſes? Yes. "Then a mind that is under ſuch a tyranny of the paſſions, will not be able "to act according to its own inclination and choice (κατα ποσιν αν βυλησθη) "but being continually hurried by its mad directors, and forced to fulfill their "orders, it will in conſequence be full of confuſion and remorſe." It would be eaſy to multiply quotations from ancient writers, chriſtian as well as heathen, to the ſame purpoſe. But theſe will be ſufficient to ſhew that moraliſts have often attributed to wicked men a deſire and inclination to do good, at the ſame time that they are overcome by their paſſions, and hurried into the moſt extravagant exceſſes. And we ſee that the argument neceſſarily ſuppoſes that wicked men are ſelf-condemned, and act againſt the ſuggeſtions of reaſon and conſcience, the better parts of the human frame. For otherwiſe if the mind had been ſo conſtituted as to approve of evil, and condemn righteouſneſs as ſuch, vice would be according to nature, the proper life of reaſonable beings, and the moſt perfect liberty. So that, unleſs perhaps we muſt except ſome few monſters of iniquity, who ſeem to have almoſt effaced the natural ſentiments of their minds, and worn out, as I may ſay, the traces of law written originally upon their hearts——this portion of moral good may be the attribute of the moſt wicked men, as coming from the hands of their Maker, and rendring them fit ſubjects of moral retribution, that they conſent unto the law of God, delight in it after the inward man, and perceive its fitneſs and beauty. And it is not without reaſon that the Apoſtle, perſonating a vicious character and ſaying, "I know that no good dwelleth in me," reſtrains this aſſertion to the fleſh, or inferior part of the ſinner, that ſyſtem of appetites which had ſubdued his reaſoning mind, leaſt he ſhould appear to have urged his charge too far, and what is worſe, to have defamed the workmanſhip of God. And when he ſays further, "it is therefore no more I that do it, but ſin that dwelleth in me," this was not intended to diſcharge any perſons from the blame of their bad conduct, by tranſferring it to an imaginary being; but comes in conſequence of that which he had undertaken to prove, and is one of the ſteps by which he makes good

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the propoſition with which he ſet out, that every wicked man is ſold under ſin. For it is characteriſtic of ſlaves, that they do not execute their own intentions and purpoſes, but the commands of another perſon; and therefore they are always conſidered as acting, not of themſelves or their own motion, but as his inſtruments who employs them in theſe ſervile offices, and acts by them. Every man therefore who follows the impulſes of paſſion, contrary to the approbation of his own mind, is in that reſpect a ſlave; becauſe he does not act from himſelf, or that part in him which denominates him a reaſonable being, but as the tool of thoſe deſires which predominate in his breaſt. And this is the concluſion, which becauſe it is ſo evident, he left his readers to draw; or perhaps he conſidered theſe two aſſertions as one and the ſame, "It is not the wicked man "who acts, but ſin in him," and "every wicked man is the ſlave of ſin." However it is very certain that ſuch charges were never meant to exculpate, but on the contrary to accuſe and reproach the perſons againſt whom they were brought: who were either taxed by their enemies with a baſe and unmanly ſervitude; or admoniſhed by their friends and inſtructors to renounce a condition equally wretched and diſhonourable.

Nor can any thing be imagined more foreign to the view of theſe kind of arguments, than to decide upon the principles of human conduct, or determine the queſtion whether men act freely or neceſſarily. This acquired and culpable ſlavery, with which ethical writers are accuſtomed to charge the vicious, was never underſtood as an abſolute incapacity of acting otherwiſe. And ſurely it is very prepoſterous to turn moral inſtructions and reproofs, in which a writer indulges a freedom and richneſs of language, into ſtrict philoſophical arguments; and catch at the colouring and ornaments of a figurative ſtile, for the deciſion of metaphyſical ſubtleties. All that the Apoſtle has ſaid is naturally and juſtly put into the mouth of a ſinner, lamenting the force and tyranny of long contracted habits (who may be ſuppoſed to expreſs himſelf in the ſtrongeſt terms) but muſt neceſſarily make a poor figure in a ſcholaſtic theſis concerning the freedom of the will; becauſe many things are beautifully ſaid in a particular connexion and manner of writing, which will not bear to be canvaſſed ſtrictly, or made the matter of a philoſophical argument.

Ver. 24. "Who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?" The Apoſtle uſes here σωμα, *body*, for σαρξ, *fleſh*, or the imperious appetites and paſſions which govern the ſinner. And the words *body* and *death* may be conſidered as in oppoſition, thus, "Who ſhall deliver me from the body, this death" which ſurrounds me? Or *death* may be in the genitive caſe, as our tranſlators put it; and then according to the Hebrew idiom, which is often imitated in the New Teſtament, it is a kind of adjective to the noun which precedes and governs it. Thus the *body of death* muſt be the ſame as the "deadly or deſtructive body;" the ſame alſo with "the body of ſin," mentioned ver. 6. of the former chapter.

Ver. 25. "I thank God, I have this deliverance by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord." Some manuſcripts read here χαρις τω Θεω, "*the grace or favour of God* by Jeſus "Chriſt our Lord," namely, delivers me; which agrees very well with the ſcope of the paſſage. But the common reading is very defenſible; for there is an ellipſis of the verb *deliver*, whichever way we read the text. And as in one way, we muſt ſupply ρυσεται, or ερρυσατο, *will deliver*, or *hath delivered*, ſo in the other we muſt ſupply ερρυθην in the firſt perſon, *I am delivered*. The fault of our

our tranſlators is, that they have not ſupplied the verb at all, and have rendered the prepoſition διὰ, *through*, inſtead of *by*; which, I know not for what good reaſon, is done in many places of the New Teſtament. The perſonated ſinner now ſpeaks as coming to the knowledge of the goſpel, and perceiving its ſalutary effects.

" So then I myſelf with the mind ſerve the law of God, but with the fleſh " the law of ſin." This paſſage ſeems to come in very little to the Apoſtle's purpoſe, as it is generally underſtood; and may be abuſed to a very bad one. Does the ſame perſon ſerve both God and ſin at the ſame time, only in different reſpects, the one with his mind, the other with his fleſh? And how does this agree with what our Saviour ſays, No man can ſerve two maſters? Whether we underſtand this as ſpoken of a good or a bad man, it cannot be true by any means of the ſame individual at one and the ſame time. For to *ſerve the law of God*, is more than to " aſſent to the law that it is good," or to " will that " which is good," both which the Apoſtle allows to the ſinner; and therefore it cannot be predicated of him: and the good man can no more be conſidered, as " ſerving with his fleſh the law of ſin," from which, as the Apoſtle declares, he is delivered by the goſpel. It muſt therefore be predicated of the ſame perſon at different times of his life, as well as in different reſpects. And we muſt conſider it, either as the declaration of a reformed ſinner reſpecting his whole conduct, paſt as well as preſent; or a general obſervation reſpecting the conduct of mankind, appropriated to a ſingle perſon. For all who obey the law of God, obey it with the mind or conſcience, which is predominant in them; but they who ſerve the law of ſin, do it with the fleſh, which has gained the aſcendancy over the mind. Theſe are the two principles, of which the Apoſtle has been ſpeaking; which, according as the one or the other is ſuperior in any man, conſtitute him the ſervant of God, or ſin. But ſurely he could not intend to ſpeak of a monſter which never exiſted in nature, equally governed by two oppoſite principles which are directly ſubverſive of each other; ſo that his mind ſhould be employed in the ſervice of God, while his fleſh was indulging the luſts and deſires of ſin. This is not the general concluſion which the Apoſtle draws from his preceding diſcourſe, but a particular one intended to make way for the other. For teaching us that the mind and underſtanding muſt lead and predominate in the ſervant of God, as the fleſh does in the ſervant of ſin, he ſhews us how, the mind being reſtored to its dominion over the man by the goſpel, and the fleſh at the ſame time ſubdued or *crucified*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, the law of God comes to be kept ſo that there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, walking not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. " THERE is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in " Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit." This ſhould not have been ſeparated from the preceding chapter, ſince it contains the Apoſtle's concluſion from his former reaſoning, and as we ſee from the next verſe, is a continuation of the preceding ſpeech: for the Apoſtle, ſtill ſpeaking in the perſon of a ſinner but now reformed by the goſpel ſays, " for

" the law of the ſpirit of life hath made me free from the law of ſin and death." And the concluſion which he draws is tantamount to the aſſertion with which he ſets out, namely, that we are not under the law, but under grace; which confirms the ſenſe that has been given above. Chriſtians, being dead to ſin, and riſen to holineſs, walking not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit, obeying the laws of the goſpel and of their own mind or conſcience, are by the mercy of God delivered from condemnation, and made heirs of eternal life; being united to Chriſt, who is riſen from the dead, and appointed the Saviour of all good men.

Ver. 2. " For the law of the Spirit of life (called ſo from its nature, being " pure and agreeable to the human mind, and its effects bringing life and peace) " which is in Chriſt Jeſus, and proceeding from him as the great Prophet and " Saviour of the world, hath ſet me at liberty from the law of ſin and death, " the law which had dominion over me, and wrought in me to bring forth fruit " unto death." We may ſee evidently from this verſe, that the perſon of whom St. Paul ſpeaks, whether it were himſelf or any other, being brought under the goſpel is freed from the law of ſin; conſequently is no longer carnal, ſold under ſin, doing the thing he hates, or neglecting that which he approves and wiſhes to do —— in ſhort, that he is quite changed from his former character; old things being paſt away, and all things become new, he has ceaſed to do evil, and learned to do well. Therefore this latter only is the true Chriſtian life, the character of the man who is in Chriſt Jeſus, and who alone is freed from condemnation; not being under the ſentence of the law, but in a ſtate of favour with God, and the heir of future bleſſedneſs.

Ver. 3, 4. " For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through " the fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin " condemned ſin in the fleſh, that the righteouſneſs of the law might be ful- " filled in us who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit." This ſentence is imperfect in its preſent form, and does not cohere according to the rules of grammar, as will be clear to any one who reads it with the leaſt attention. Several attempts have been made to reconcile it with the rules of conſtruction, but not quite ſucceſsful. Some critics ſupply επρωσε, *did*, after Θεος, *God*, which ſuits much better with the Engliſh verſion where this verb is expreſſed, than with the Greek original where it does not precede in the ſentence. Sir Norton Knatchbull would ſupply the ſubſtantive verb ην before πεμψας, that it ſhould be *God was ſending*, for *God ſent*. The inſtances to which he refers are ſo far from proving his point, that it is evident to any one who caſts his eye upon them, that the participles there do not depend upon a verb ſubſtantive underſtood, but upon another verb afterwards expreſſed. See *Luke* vi. 13. *Acts* xxiv. 5.

This learned critic's obſervation concerning the order of the words in the former part of the verſe, ſeems much better founded, namely, that they muſt be conſtrued as if they were tranſpoſed, in this manner, Εν ω γαρ ησθενει το αδυνατον της νομου. Εν ω ſeems an exact tranſlation of the Hebrew conjunction, אשר, or באשר, with the prepoſition, which ſignifies *in eo quod*, *becauſe* or *foraſmuch as*. For the Hebrews uſed the relative article with the verb in its perſonal or conjugated form, in the ſame manner as the Latins, where the Greeks frequently employed the demonſtrative article with the infinitive mood. So that

ἐν ὦ ἠσθένει, or באשר ἠσθένει, is just the same as τῷ ἀσθενεῖν, which a writer of pure Greek would probably have used. For the reason of this we need only attend to the observation of grammarians, that every relative supposes its antecedent, and may therefore be considered as between two cases of a substantive, or the same case repeated. Thus *qui venit*, is at length *homo qui homo venit*; so ἐν ὦ ἠσθένει, is the same as ἐν τῷ ἀσθενεῖν ὦ ἠσθένει, *in* or *because of the weakness with which it was weak*; which comes to just the same as if he had said, *because it was weak*. We find the like 2 Cor. v. 4. ἐφ' ὦ οὐθέλομεν, which is at length ἐπὶ τῷ θέλειν ὦ θέλομεν οὐκ, sc. ἐκδύσασθαι, "on account of the desire which "we have desired not to be uncloathed." To convey a stronger idea of the weakness of the law, and its little success in reforming the corrupt manners of the world, the Apostle redoubles his expression (for literally it is, *because the incapacity of the law was weak*) which not being attended to, probably occasioned our translators to use a circuit of words that destroys the clearness and coherence of the sentence. Διὰ σαρκὸς, *through*, or rather *by the flesh*, should perhaps be separated from the former part of the sentence, and joined with ὁ Θεὸς, *God*. For the preposition διὰ, with a genitive case, signifying not the efficient or procuring cause, but the instrument or passage of a thing, seems here to express the instrument by which God effected that reformation, which the law was unable to compass. And then the following words, *sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh*, are parenthetical and explanatory of what goes before. If besides this we join the words *and for sin*, whatever be the meaning of them, in the same parenthesis, the construction of the whole will be clear and intelligible, thus, "For because the law was weak and incapable, God by means of flesh, "or by the instrumentality of a human being (sending his own Son in the "likeness of sinful flesh and for sin) condemned sin that was in the flesh." If we are averse to allow an Hebraism here, or any transposition in the order of the words, we must render ἐν ὦ *with which*, and suppose that the first member of the sentence is taken absolutely, or which is the same thing, that the preposition which governs it is understood; and the only difference in the version will be this, "For in consideration of the incapacity of the law with which it was "weak, &c." The condemnation of sin in the latter part of the verse is taken in a sense somewhat unusual, but not very difficult to understand. For God by his Son is said to do somewhat which the law through its weakness was not able to effect. But the law did condemn all sin in full and strong terms, and threatened punishments to the offenders; so that there was no weakness or imperfection of this kind in it. Therefore by the condemnation of sin which the law could not effect, something different must be meant from barely declaring it wrong, or subjecting it to punishment. And the case is this. Sin here, as in the former chapter, is furnished with a personal character, and is considered as being condemned to death, his power and his very existence taken from him, being as it were destroyed and annihilated; an effect which the Apostle supposes to be produced in such as are truly reformed and sanctified by the gospel, so that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in or by them, walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

There is another difficulty in this verse, relating to the signification of καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας, *and for sin*; which some would render *and a sacrifice for sin*, others *and by a sacrifice for sin*, others again *and for* or *on account of sin*. It is said that

αμαρτια and περι αμαρτιας alſo ſignify a ſacrifice for ſin, and when joined with things ſaid to be ſacrificed for ſin, denote their deſignation to that purpoſe, which fact is very true. So τραγος περι αμαρτιας may be rendered *the goat for the ſin-offering*, as well as *the goat for ſin*, becauſe the goat for ſin was always an offering. But this will not prove that the words have ſuch a ſignification in themſelves, or when joined with things not uſually offered in ſacrifice for ſin; which is the thing that ought to be proved, in order to ſhew that πεμψων τον υιον περι αμαρτιας may properly be rendered *ſending his ſon an offering for ſin*. But I do not find that, through the Old or New Teſtament, περι αμαρτιας, *for ſin*, ever by itſelf, or out of connection with ſomething ſacrifical, involves the idea of a ſacrifice. And perhaps it is true, that theſe words ſhould never be tranſlated *an offering for ſin*, except where the connection and ſubject ſpoken of is ſuch that, being rendered ſimply *for ſin*, the ſame idea would be conveyed to the reader. The inſtances from *Lev.* vii. 27. *Pſal.* xxxix. 6. quoted *Heb.* x. 6. and *Iſaiah* liii. 10. are the moſt proper to eſtabliſh the independent ſignification of this phraſe. But though περι αμαρτιας, in the two firſt paſſages, be properly enough rendered *ſacrifices for ſin*, this is not becauſe the words have that ſignification of themſelves, but becauſe nothing elſe beſides offerings are ſpoken of, and becauſe the words *ſacrifice and burnt offering*, which precede, furniſh hints enough for ſupplying the ellipſis, and leave the ſenſe inconteſtible. And we do not find that the writer to the Hebrews, who quotes theſe words, when he ſpeaks of ſacrifices for ſin in his own language, ſhews himſelf the liberty of omitting ſuch a principal word as θυσιας or προσφορα, where there is nothing in the ſenſe or connection to direct the ſupplying of it. And *Iſa.* liii. 10. the words εαν δωτε περι αμαρτιας, which may be rendered *if you give an offering for ſin*, have this ſignification only becauſe of the verb *give* or *offer*, which is joined with περι αμαρτιας. Language is certainly not ſo arbitrary a thing as ſome criticks would lead us to imagine. But what is ſtill more extraordinary, criticks would perſuade us, not only that theſe words may ſignify *a ſacrifice for ſin*, but *by a ſacrifice for ſin*. And here I believe they go upon ſome different grounds, and ſeem to think that as αμαρτια ſometimes ſignifies of itſelf *the ſin-offering*, ſo περι αμαρτιας may ſignify *by a ſin-offering*. But, allowing the former part of this aſſertion, where will they find ſuch an uſe of the prepoſition περι? I do not ſee how any one can tranſlate και περι αμαρτιας *and by a ſacrifice for ſin*, as it is given us in the margin of our Bibles, without underſtanding the words δια της θυσιας after και, by an ellipſis of the prepoſition, article, and noun, that is, of every thing neceſſary to determine the government and ſignification of the phraſe in queſtion——a way of writing which is not only unuſual but portentous, and juſtly offenſive to every friend to grammar and perſpicuity. Bos, in his ellipſes, directs us to ſupply θυσιαν in the accuſative before περι αμαρτιας, which to be ſure is much more reaſonable. But I cannot aſſent to it, becauſe I do not find an ellipſis of the word θυσια in any of thoſe ſacrifical phraſes, except where the article is expreſſed to ſhew the defect of the noun. And as μοσχος or τραγος περι αμαρτιας ſignify the *calf* or *goat of the ſin-offering*, not by ellipſis of the word θυσια or *ſacrifice*, but becauſe, as was ſaid before, the goat and calf for ſin always were offerings; ſo the phraſes η or το περι αμαρτιας are the only ones which directly and of themſelves ſignify *a ſacrifice for ſin*, where the article evidently ſhews that θυσια or θυμα

sense is omitted. Since therefore there is nothing in the context or phraseology in this place, which directs us to understand περι αμαρτιας in a sacrifical sense, we must necessarily take the words in their more common acceptation of *for* or *concerning sin*, and explain them of one of the great ends of Christ's mission, which was to reform the world. Unless we should suppose that αμαρτιας is in the accusative plural, governed by the preposition περι, and joined with σαρκος the *flesh*, instead of πιμπων *sending*; and then, according to the known and frequent signification of περι with the accusative, which denotes the character, habit, and employment, of the thing or person spoken of, it will mark somewhat more strongly than is done by the preceding αμαρτιας the state and condition of mankind at the time of Christ's appearance, who were not only *sinful* or *sinning*, but περι αμαρτιας, *immersed in sins*. Nor is it any objection to this interpretation, that Christ will be said to appear in the likeness of such beings, since he is certainly said to assume the likeness of *sinful* flesh. And we must be obliged in both cases to detach every thing criminal from the resemblance, and suppose him like to us in all things, sin excepted. But which is the truer interpretation I leave others to judge.

It is observable that our translators, by joining the words *and for sin* with what follows, make sin itself, in its condemnation or destruction, to be the sacrifice for sin, if any sacrifice be spoken of. Otherwise the idea which their pointing must suggest, is, that God for or on account of sin condemned sin itself, and not the sinners, by the mission of his Son. Thus it is said, that *God sent his Son, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved*, that is, that sin might be destroyed, and the sinners live and do righteously. A sense which is very reasonable in itself, as well as suitable to the Apostle's design here; and should therefore entirely satisfy a Critick, if it could be made consistent with the construction of the rest of the sentence.

THE END

A diligent Application to the proper Buſineſs of Life recommended from the Mortality of Man.

A

SERMON

ON

ECCLESIASTES IX. 10.

By the late Rev. JOHN ALEXANDER.

Eccles. Chap. IX. Ver. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.

IN whatever view the life of man has been considered, whether as the whole of his being, or preparatory to another state; whether as containing the sum of human hope and enjoyment, or only as the infancy of his rational powers, and the prelude to a more perfect existence and happiness; the inference which wise men have drawn from it, has always been in favour of industry and moderation; and of that virtue, which constitutes the proper excellence of reasonable creatures, and procures them the most solid advantages.

If our expectations were confined to this world, and the present state of things were not only short but final, though there would be more of vanity in the human condition, yet there must still be a sufficient cause for the exertion of our rational and active powers, that we might improve this short term to the utmost, and increase the enjoyment of a transitory being by our wisdom and virtue.

On the other hand, if, as we most reasonably hope, the present life will be succeeded by another, the most glorious and happy to all good men, a life of perfect reason, and filled with the most delightful employment, this is an additional and most for-

cible motive to a courſe of right action, and the due cultivation of our ſeveral talents.

The mortality of man therefore is a proper foundation, upon which to build an exhortation to diligence, and the improvement of time; ſince nothing can be a ſtronger tie upon him than this, not to waſte his life in ſlothfulneſs and inactivity, if he ever means to anſwer the end of living to himſelf and others, or to reap the fruits of wiſdom and induſtry.

In purſuing the ſubject, I ſhall,

I. Conſider what is implied in the advice of the text, to do with our might whatſoever our hands find to do: And,

II. Illuſtrate the motive from which this advice is recommended, namely, the mortality of man.

I. I ſhall conſider what is implied in the advice in the text, to do with our might whatſoever our hands find to do; or whatſoever belongs to us as our proper buſineſs, and comes within the limits of our ſphere and capacity.

1. It teaches us diligence and aſſiduity in the daily employments of life.

It is fit that every one ſhould beſtow that attention and thought upon the occupation in which he is engaged, that is ſufficient to carry it on with ſucceſs. There is an earneſtneſs in conducting the common buſineſs of our ſtation which is highly becoming, and is attended with the moſt viſible advantages. Application is one of thoſe virtues which generally rewards itſelf, and, when turned to proper objects, ſeldom fails to make a man an uſeful and reſpectable member of human ſociety. Beſides, ſuch

ſuch is the condition of the greateſt part of the world, that ſome degree of labour is neceſſary to furniſh them with the common bleſſings of exiſtence.

It was never the intention of the Creator, that man ſhould lead a ſupine inactive life; therefore diligence is made, for the moſt part, requiſite to procure not only the ornaments and ſuperfluities, but the very neceſſaries of his being. And though ſome have been placed, by the favour of providence, above the reach of immediate want, yet it is neither honourable nor uſeful even for them to be altogether unemployed. So that the labour, which they do not owe directly to their neceſſities, they ſtill owe in ſome meaſure, both to themſelves and to the public.

Wherefore he who ſuffers his faculties to ruſt in idleneſs, or drowns them in pleaſure and diſſipation, deſerts the life of a man, and becomes an uſeleſs load to the earth, a mere conſumer of other peoples labours, who preys upon the public ſtock, and makes no return for the eaſe and diſtinction he enjoys. For, ſince men are united together for their mutual aid and advantage, he who repays, by no ſervices in his power, the protection and ſupport he receives from the community, is very much like a robber, who plunders every thing within his reach, and lives upon the ſpoils which he has taken from the honeſt and induſtrious.

2. Another thing, recommended in the text, is the ſpeedy execution of every worthy and important ſcheme; whether it concern ourſelves, our families, or the public.

Procraſtination ſteals away our time, blunts the edge of reſolution, and thus diſappoints the nobleſt deſigns. The dilatory man has very little advantage over the ſlothful; for if the one ſeldom

dom purpoſes, the other as ſeldom executes the purpoſes he has formed. His doubts and fears perpetually interpoſe, and render all his wiſdom uſeleſs. By indulging to theſe, he ſuffers the opportunities of action to eſcape, weakens and exhauſts his zeal, till the time is paſt, or indifference ſucceeds to deſire, and the propoſed advantage is irretrievably loſt to himſelf or others. Schemes both of public and private utility depend on opportunities, over which men have no power; and, if they are not ſeized at once, can ſeldom be recalled.

There is as much wiſdom ſhewn in laying hold of the proper ſeaſon of action, as in diſpoſing and ordering circumſtances for any momentous undertaking. And he who has prudence to concert the plan, but is backward in the execution of important deſigns, gives up, by his irreſolution, the advantages of a ſuperior genius, and is upon a level with him that has no underſtanding. Diſpatch and alacrity in execution muſt join with acuteneſs of invention, in order to form the man of buſineſs, and complete that character, which otherwiſe can only be ranked with thoſe whimſical projectors, who ſpend their lives in planning ſchemes which can never be accompliſhed. For delay is a real obſtruction to every undertaking; and, though it ariſes wholly from ourſelves, has often as great an effect in defeating the meaſures we have concerted, as any the ſtrongeſt oppoſition we can meet with from others, or even the natural impoſſibility of the thing we have taken in hand.

3. The laſt thing I ſhall mention, as implied in the text, is the conſtant and ſtrenuous exertion of all our faculties, in the proper buſineſs of reaſonable and moral agents.

Beſides the proviſion for our common neceſſities, and the more preſſing offices of life, there is another work enjoined us by our great Creator, which conſiſts in the improvement of our

minds, and the government of our paſſions and affections—a work no leſs proper to us as men; becauſe, though our *being* depends on the former, our *well-being* depends almoſt entirely upon the latter. As we have many wants and deſires in common with other creatures, ſo we are diſtinguiſhed from them by the gift of reaſon, a faculty which makes us capable of a nobler life, and of more important purſuits; and alſo by thoſe kind affections which connect us together in ſociety, and furniſh the more refined enjoyments of friendſhip and humanity.

By this ſuperiority we riſe, in the firſt place, to the knowledge and love of our Creator, and to every thing which is peculiarly called religion; of which as man alone is capable, ſo it is the nobleſt prerogative of the rational nature. By this alſo we are led to diſcern, and prompted to diſcharge, thoſe duties which ariſe from the more general or particular relations of life, and learn univerſally that conduct which becomes us as dependent ſocial beings, who are connected with the Maker and Governor of all things, and with that great family both in heaven and in earth, which are named from him, and of which he is the common Father and Head. The faithful diſcharge of theſe duties, and a right behaviour in the ſeveral relations we bear to him and to each other, muſt undoubtedly be conſidered as the firſt concern of a rational creature, the moſt neceſſary buſineſs he has to perform, and the grand deſign with which he was ſent into the world.

Thus have we ſeen what are the proper employments of men, and moſt deſerving of their attention and ſollicitude: and the general importance of diligence in each has been ſuggeſted at the ſame time. But the writer of the book of Eccleſiaſtes recommends this aſſiduity from a diſtinct and peculiar conſideration; namely, from the mortality of man: *for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave, whither thou goeſt.*

II. This

II. This motive we are now in the ſecond place to illuſtrate; and we ſhall enlarge upon it under the two following particulars.

1. The nature of that ſtate upon which we enter by death. *There is neither work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the grave.*

It is a ſtate of perfect ignorance and inactivity, in which we retain no ſenſe of our preſent condition, no memory of former tranſactions, nor any of the pleaſing capacities of action and enjoyment. *Man dieth, and where is he? His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his duſt, and in that very day his thoughts periſh.* The work which engaged his whole attention, which employed the labours of the day and the meditations of the night, is come to a period. The wiſdom of the wiſe, the knowledge of the learned, and the devices of the ingenious, are heard of no more. They are ſeparated from human ſociety, deprived of all commerce with the living, *neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the ſun.* Their bodies are committed to the ground, and the breath of life returns to God who gave it. *Their memory alſo is forgotten, and their love, and hatred, and envy, are now periſhed.* The time for planning and executing weighty deſigns is over, and the very talents for deliberation and action are deſtroyed.

Whatever we do to better our own or others condition, muſt be done while life continues, for in the houſe of ſilence and death there is no counſel; the noiſe and tumult of buſineſs is at an end, and univerſal quietneſs obtains. There is a total ceſſation of labour and invention, the hand of the induſtrious is bound faſt, and the quick enterpriſing thought of the prudent is taken away; the tongue of the eloquent is become mute, the ſtrength and vigour of the mighty brought low. Thoſe accompliſhments of body and mind in which we ſo much rejoiced, and which

paved our way to reputation and ſucceſs, are as if they had never been. The ſweetneſs of youth, the firmneſs of manhood, the authority of age, the valuable qualities of the underſtanding and heart, wiſdom, generoſity, and virtue, are vaniſhed and loſt. And though we hope to live again, and recover theſe noble powers of thought and action which we are deprived of in death, yet this ſecond life, to which we aſpire, by the favour and goodneſs of the Creator, is not of ſuch a nature as to leſſen thoſe motives to diligence which our mortality ſo naturally ſuggeſts to us.

The reviving proſpect of immortality, and that glorious hope of a reſurrection which is promiſed in the goſpel, as it is a powerful antidote againſt deſpair, and repels the gloomy comfortleſs thought of loſing ourſelves in death, and ſinking into everlaſting oblivion; ſo it furniſhes an argument which ought to influence us beyond any other to induſtry and carefulneſs; for upon our preſent conduct depend not only the eaſe and enjoyment of this life, but our expectations of another, and the hope of that bleſſedneſs with which it is accompanied. The inheritance is laid up in heaven, reſerved for thoſe who ſhall hereafter be called to it; but the diſcipline and preparation for it is *here:* the time of trial, in which it is to be ſeen whether we are worthy and qualified for ſuch a poſſeſſion, is at preſent.

The grave preſents no ſcene of trial and improvement, gives no place of repentance to the wicked, nor advancement of goodneſs to the righteous. The exerciſe of juſtice, charity and temperance, of piety, reſignation, and truſt in God, is excluded. Theſe are the virtues of the living, for the dead praiſe not God, nor truſt in him; they perform no works of liberality and beneficence, nor improve in the graces of the Chriſtian character. Life is appointed us for action, for the employment of our

faculties, and the exertion of thoſe diſpoſitions and habits by which our ſtate hereafter muſt be determined.—But farther:

2. This ſtate, as it is real and certain, ſo it is continually approaching. *The grave, to which thou goeſt.*

Diligence in ſeizing and improving the preſent moment is peculiarly incumbent upon us, becauſe it is not only appointed us to die, and ceaſe from action, but the time of our diſſolution is near, and haſtening continually forward. The longeſt life of man is ſhort and fleeting, and ſoon comes to its period. But how much of this ſhort duration may be reckoned upon, even by the young and vigorous, is the moſt uncertain thing in nature. A thouſand unforeſeen cauſes may operate to break the thread of our days in the midſt, and abridge even this narrow period. But let them be extended to the utmoſt, and arrive to their full meaſure,——*What is our life? it is even as a vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away: for all fleſh is as graſs, and the glory of man as the flower of graſs: the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof ſhall know it no more.*

The narrow limits of human life leave no room for idleneſs and delay. Every moment, as it paſſes before us in quick ſucceſſion, calls upon us to improve it to the utmoſt, and make that our own, by wiſdom and virtue, which, when once paſt, can never be recalled. Year after year admoniſhes us, that life ſpeeds away, and that we have buſineſs of importance to be finiſhed. The preſent moment is now before us, as the former one; but when it is gone, it will never return; no prayers or entreaties can bring it back; but it muſt be ſet down to our account, either to our praiſe or confuſion. Every hour withdraws ſomething from the ſpace allotted us, and leaves us ſo much leſs time in which to be wiſe and good; and yet the whole is ſhort enough

enough for the buſineſs we have to do, and requires to be improved by unwearied aſſiduity and diligence.

He who neglects his proper employment as a reaſonable being, and waſtes the preſent day and hour in negligence and ſupineneſs, in the pleaſures of ſin and the indulgencies of a vain appetite, in hope that he ſhall have time enough hereafter to prepare for heaven, and do the duties allotted him, muſt either ſuppoſe that life is very long, or that the buſineſs of it may be brought within a very narrow compaſs. But how fooliſh and vain are ſuch imaginations! how inconſiſtent with the conſtant experience of human life! Wiſdom and virtue are not the acquirements of an hour, to be made our own by a wiſh, and ſeized in an inſtant, when we pleaſe to lay hold of them. They are the purſuit of a whole life; to be ſought for early, and with the utmoſt earneſtneſs, and cultivated with diligence and unwearied application. We are groſsly deceived, if we think that we can become fit for eternal happineſs within the compaſs of a few moments, or expect to ſecure ourſelves, and gain the favour of our Maker, by the ſhort preparation and repentance of a departing hour. We muſt live to God, and lead an heavenly life, if we ever expect to reach thoſe bliſsful abodes: we muſt form the habits of goodneſs and holineſs, in order to be admitted there, and ſpend an happy eternity in the preſence of God, and the company of holy and righteous beings. To-day then, while it is called to-day, let us lay hold upon life, and improve the bleſſings which are put into our hands, that we may die the death of the righteous, and our latter end may be like theirs.

enough for the business we have to do, and requires to be improved by unwearied assiduity and diligence.

He who neglects his proper employment as a reasonable being, and wastes the present day and hour in negligence and supineness, in the pleasures of sin and the indulgencies of a vain appetite, in hope that he shall have time enough hereafter to prepare for heaven, and do the duties allotted him, must either suppose that life is very long, or that the business of it may be brought within a very narrow compass. But how foolish and vain are such imaginations! how inconsistent with the constant experience of human life! Wisdom and virtue are not the acquirements of an hour, to be made our own by a wish, and seized in an instant, when we please to lay hold [illegible]. They are the pursuit of a whole life; to be [illegible], and with the utmost earnestness, and cultivated [illegible] and unwearied application. We are grossly deceived, [illegible] think that we can become fit for eternal happiness within the compass of a few moments, or expect to secure ourselves, and gain the [illegible] of our Maker, by the short preparation and repentance of a departing hour. We must live to God, and lead an heavenly life, if we ever expect to reach those blissful abodes: we must form the habits of goodness and holiness, in order to be admitted there, and spend an happy eternity in the presence of [illegible], and the company of holy and righteous beings. [illegible], while it is called to-day, let us lay hold upon life, and improve the blessings which are put into our hands, that we may die the death of the righteous, and our latter end may be [illegible].